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MUSIC FOR GOD

By THERESA WEISER

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FOR ARTHUR, JOHNNY AND LIZ

FOREWORD

MUSIC FOR GOD is, on the surface, a novel which recounts the story of a composer's struggle for recognition and for freedom to work in his own way. But the underlying theme shows the growth in spirit of a man whose life was dedicated to the glorification of God through his music. The manuscript deals with the life and work of the Austrian composer, Anton Bruckner, and describes his temptations, his struggles, and his final emergence as a great composer and a saintly man.

I have tried to give in this book as much exact information about Bruckner as possible, and have therefore kept close to the truth. Some of the incidents, however, had to be invented to clarify and interpret, and even more to connect and weave into a narrative the various events which make up a man's life. The fictitious situations fit in, however, with the historical and cultural background and the characters described. The first scene, for instance, is entirely invented. There is no evidence that Toni Bruckner as a child ever expressed the wish to become an angel, yet it is known that he had his heavenly goal constantly before his eyes. Similarly, there is no evidence that he was shocked at the sight of an indecent picture in Vienna, yet from what we know of his chaste character, and of the prevailing lack of morals in the Vienna of his days, this situation might have happened.

Most of the characters are true to life and names such as

Bishop Rudigier, Prelates Arneth and Mayr, and the names of Bruckner's teachers Sechter and Kitzler, and that of Exner, then President of the University of Vienna, are historic. A few of the characters are, however, invented, four of them being composites: Spat is a composite of Bruckner's friends, Hecht of his foes, Lois of the type of young woman Bruckner used to fall in love with and Barbara the type of woman most likely to care for Bruckner.

The book contains fictionalized descriptions of almost all Bruckner's works, adapted from analyses and descriptions found in Decsey's and Auer's excellent biographies. Quotations have been taken from the Bible, from the Encyclicals on marriage and education, from Goethe, and from Woodlock's *The Catholic Pattern.* Information on painting and music is based on material in Spengler's *The Decline of the West.* Certain facts and incidents illustrating Bruckner's character and the atmosphere of the last century have been drawn from Auer's and Engel's biographies, from Decsey's Bruckner play and Bachmann's Bruckner novel.

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MUSIC FOR GOD

PART ONE

Andante Con Variazioni

Part One

ANDANTE CON VARIAZIONI

Theme: Lord, what wilt Thou have me do?

I.

1.

It was a very fine summer day in the year 1833. In the small Austrian village of Ansfelden a group of boys and girls waited impatiently for the arrival of the mail-coach, which marked the noon hour and also the end of their classes. Behind the teacher's desk, Miss Greti sat in her gray flannel suit with the green leaves embroidered on its lapels, and her eyes beamed upon the motley crowd before her, youngsters aged from nine to twelve, who were desperately trying to kill time, the girls chewing the ends of their braids, and the boys polishing the wooden benches with the seats of their leather pants.

Only Toni Bruckner, a dark-haired little boy in the fifth row, was in no hurry to get away. Through the open window he gazed out at the hills across the valley and at the high steeple of the parish church. There was a gleam of gold over the level land, where the wheat fields rippled back and

forth like the surface of the duck pond under the wind. It was very warm out there, warm and quiet, but the classroom was nice and cool, and the soft murmuring of many voices almost put him to sleep.

Toni knew that school would be out in a short while and he meant to make the most of this time. He half-closed his eyes and looked up at the fleecy white clouds, that resembled a flock of sheep. He felt a great longing to be up there, lying beneath a wide-spreading celestial oak and looking right into heaven. But the longing was in part curiosity too. He wondered if the tree and the grass would be green, or rather blue, like the horizon.

Miss Greti's voice seemed to reach him from far away. "Let's play a game these last few minutes," she suggested. "Remember that guessing game we played the other day?"

"Oh yes, yes, yes!" A confusion of voices. "The guessing game!"

"You first, Michael. Come up on the platform and show us by your motions and gestures what your occupation is going to be, once you are a grown-up man."

There was a pause while Michael acted out his pantomime, and Toni, moving to the edge of the bench where he could have a better view from the window, slipped away into his clinging day dreams. From far, far away, he could hear two clear tones following each other, B-E. Built upon these two notes, a melody started in Toni's head. Flutes and violins, he thought. And they brought out everything he himself had always tried in vain to put into his music—the rustling of the grass, the tinkling of the cow-bells, the drum-

ming of the woodpecker's bill, the scratching of the squirrel as it scampers along a branch.

It seemed as though someone were shaking a big fist in his face, and annoyed, Toni pushed it aside. B--E. The melody sounded incredibly pure, as though a winged shepherd, lying on a fleecy couch, were playing it on his pipe.

Toni felt his little neighbor Barbara's sharp elbow dig warningly into his ribs.

"Pay a little attention now and then, Toni," he heard Miss Greti say. The music grew fainter and he felt suddenly ashamed of the childish world into which his dream had led him. He muttered an apology and directed his attention toward the platform, where one boy made recognizable fishing movements, while another kicked out with his legs as though he were striking an enormous ball.

Toni held his hands against his ears to shut out the music, but even so he could still hear it and distinguish in it the staccato sound of an applauding arena, the hollow spank of a leather ball, the splash of a speckled trout upon a silvery surface. He tried to make words out of these sounds. He wanted to say: Michael is a prize-fighter, George a fisherman, but although he moved his lips, all he could get out was a soft whistle and in a moment the whistle grew louder and still he had not said anything at all.

The shepherd's reed had grown louder too, carrying the melody up and down with a richness as though a whole chorus of angels were singing. The music was so near that it seemed to Toni as though he were standing on top of the cloud. But in the next minute the cloud parted and all he

perceived was a sea of faces—the faces of his classmates—and he stared at them stupidly.

"You should have waited your turn, Toni." Miss Greti's voice had a slightly impatient note in it.

Barbara waved her thin arm frantically in the air. "Maybe he wants to be a fowler. The fowlers whistle just the way he did," she said in her treble voice.

"Well, Toni, you've got us cornered. None of us knows what you want to be. Now you'd better tell us."

Toni got up. He never knew how it happened. He was sure he meant to tell them that he wanted to be a shepherd, but to his own surprise, he said, speaking clearly and without faltering: "I want to be an angel."

There was a howl of laughter and a very un-angelic shout from the class. Everyone laughed, even Miss Greti. The laughter rose louder than the roar of that strange new monster, the steam-engine, before it entered the tunnel.

"But your whistling was quite misleading," Miss Greti said, a gay twinkle in her eyes.

"This is what he should have done." One of Toni's older companions raised and lowered his arms, as though he were flying, and Toni could imagine the time he would have from now on with his schoolmates fluttering around him or jumping at him from the branch of a tree, singing: "Vom Himmel hoch da komm ich her . . ." (From high heaven I'm coming down to you . . .)

"That's enough now." Miss Greti stopped the noise, and, turning to Toni, began: "You must give us another chance. Your answer was too general. We all want to become angels

some day, I'm sure. Now show us what you want to be on this earth."

Toni stared moodily at the ground. He knew as well as anyone else that nothing was to be so despised as womanish ways and that music was the most effeminate of all occupations. How could he, after that first blunder, allow himself to become once more the target for his friends' banter? He felt that any other profession puts something like a suit of armor on a man, whereas a musician has to go through life unprotected and quite vulnerable. He was resolved not to tell them anything of his plans, when the tinny post-horn sounded and the church bells began to ring the Angelus. At the sound of the bells everybody stops his work, the farmer stands still in the field, the housewife folds her hands in the kitchen, the shepherd takes his birch-bark flute from his lips and they all bow their heads and say the same prayer: "The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary . . ."

The class rose in unison and all during its prayers the church bells rang out. The bells had a clear and vibrant sound that could be heard through the village and beyond and even echoing over the hills. There were no others like them in the whole region. When they rang for a funeral they seemed to cry, and on feast days they rejoiced until the hearts of the villagers became joyous too. The bells gave Toni courage and when the children had finished their prayer, he said in a loud voice: "I want to become a musician. I love music. I love to sing and to play the violin."

Again the boys howled with laughter while the girls giggled hysterically. Miss Greti did not laugh this time, but

looked at him seriously. "Stay a little while, Toni," she said. "I'd like to talk to you."

"I'll wait for you outside," Barbara whispered.

"Oh, go away," he grumbled, rubbing his cheek where her unruly hair had tickled him. He wanted everybody to leave ahead of him. It would have been dreadful to go all the long way home with the others. While they were collecting their books and slate-pencils, he pretended to fasten the strap of his sandal to avoid seeing the flapping gestures with which they tried to tease him.

When the classroom was empty, Miss Greti walked down the aisle to his seat. "Didn't you recognize the game we were playing?" She sat down on the narrow bench beside him.

"I heard some of it, but the sound of the post-horn came in between."

"The post-horn!" Miss Greti cried. "Don't tell me, Toni, you could hear the horn from more than two miles away!"

"I heard some of it," he said in injured tones.

The corners of Miss Greti's mouth twitched. "Don't you like my classes at all?" she asked then in a gentle voice.

"I like singing," he said.

"I've noticed that. But Toni, that isn't enough. You want to make something worthwhile of yourself. You don't want to end up playing the barrel-organ in the street, or the fiddle at a peasant's wedding, do you?"

Toni was not sure so he said nothing, and suddenly, and without his willing it, another whistle broke free. The sound came up in his throat all by itself. It seemed to swing on

his vocal chords or whatever they were, and he just could not seem to hold it back. Frightened, lest his impudence had angered Miss Greti, he looked away, but her laughter rang out as clear as a bell. "You are incorrigible, aren't you, Toni? But I don't mind your whistling as long as you don't do it during classes."

Guiltily, Toni nodded.

"And tell me, can't you ever whistle a tune I know?" she asked, patting his head.

"I'll try," Toni said gravely.

"I wish you would," Miss Greti replied, now serious too. "And Toni, if you really want to become an angel, you must begin by sacrificing on earth. Give up your day-dreaming and follow in your father's footsteps. Prepare to be a teacher. That's the way. And nearest to a musician too. You know that a village teacher is at the same time a sexton, responsible for the church services, the choir, high mass, weddings and funerals—a rich field for your musical ambitions."

Toni nodded. "Like my father," he said solemnly.

"It's all right to be a musician, once you are rich and famous," she told him, "but until then it's a thorny path, and not for one who will have to support his parents." She dismissed him then, flashing him a last encouraging smile.

Toni walked home slowly, reflecting quite seriously on his promise, and suddenly something began to hurt inside him as he had never been hurt in his life before, and he began to cry silently. He could not stop his tears however hard he tried, and the dust he stirred up with his sandals did not rise high enough to hide his grief-stricken face. He

stretched himself out in a patch of corn growing close to the road. The big yellow stalks swayed gently, the throbbing insect life shaking their ears.

What is the matter with me? he thought. I don't want to shirk my duties, and I don't want to give up music. What shall I do? He cried as though his heart would break, and yet he could not remember ever having cried before. Now he cried because his baby sister had died a year ago, and because his father had been ailing and it was awful to think he might some day die. Overhead passed a flock of birds, but to-day their jubilant voices only filled Toni's heart with sorrow. He cried because he knew he would fight a losing battle against those teasing boys and commit a sin on top of it all, and he cried because it was clear to him that if he did not learn an instrument on earth, he would not be able to play in heaven if he got there. He cried because of some inner discomfort for which he finally found a very natural explanation. Why, I'm hungry, he thought. He rose, shook the ants out of his black curls, and walked the rest of the way home.

When he opened the kitchen door, he heard the thin wailing of Nanny, his new baby sister, and his mother's voice calling out softly to him to warm a little milk for the child from the big pitcher in the corner.

The rich white fluid made a musical sound when Toni poured it into a small pot and, while he warmed it on the stove, he tried to reproduce the note, gently hitting his fork against various objects in the kitchen. Then he poured the milk into the baby's bottle and carried it up to the bedroom, carefully climbing the almost perpendicular stair.

"Father's resting," Toni's mother whispered. "He's been out with the pastor half the night."

Toni nodded. He had heard that the grocer's wife had died, and his father always went with the priest when he administered the last sacrament.

While the baby greedily sucked her milk, Toni tenderly watched his sleeping father on the couch, his tall, bony figure in the shiny black trousers and the shirt mother had woven and sewn, his thin face kind even in sleep. The sight of the old cut-away coat, all buttoned up and hung carefully over the back of the chair, almost made Toni cry once more.

"You look hungry, son," his mother whispered. "There's a pot with dumplings on the stove. You can have some, but don't eat too heavily because we'll all eat at two, when your sisters are back from school."

At the thought of dumplings Toni smacked his lips. Quickly he went back into the kitchen. He found a huge loaf of home-baked bread in the pantry and a shallow dish with drippings still a little warm. With these and the dumplings he settled down at the oaken table.

One nice thing about a teacher's life, he reflected, was that he was also the sexton and could ring the bells high up in the steeple, hand the priest the holy vessels, and accompany him at night whenever he went out to administer the last sacraments to a dying villager. Once, when his father had been ill, Toni had gone with the parson instead. He still remembered how they had walked through the dark quiet hamlet together, and how all the time his heart had pounded. He had never, not even in a procession, been so close to

Our Lord. He recalled how everyone had knelt around the sick man's bed to say the Lord's Prayer, and how the light of the candles had been almost outdone by the starlight streaming in through the windows. They had been praying for a long time and then, when he received the Body of Christ, the dying man's face shone, brighter than star and candlelight together, smiling the smile of one who can see right into the opened sky.

Perhaps it would not be too bad to become a teacher after all, Toni thought, helping himself to a huge piece of bread upon which he spread the drippings sparingly so as to leave enough for another piece. While he ate, he looked up at the Crucifix hanging in the corner. There were streaks of blood on the Lord's Forehead, that Toni had never even noticed before. They must have hurt Him a great deal with the crown of thorns. And he, Toni, was making such a fuss over a little sacrifice like giving up music.

He fought an inclination to lay his head on the table and give himself up to his grief. With heroic resolution he got up, took his little red violin from the top of his father's spinet and hid the temptation of its strings in the bottom drawer of the huge, painted chest. Then there seemed nothing at all to do and life was very empty. Toni sat down on the door-step. One of his classmates was trimming the hedge in the garden across the road.

"Want to make mud balls?" Toni shouted. "I know a ditch with real good, sticky mud."

"Why don't you play with your friend, the archangel Michael?" the boy shouted back, and his laughter sounded like the shrill whinnying of a colt.

It was a shame Toni could not fight him because of the fifth commandment. He wished Father Joseph had not taught him so well. But maybe he could. After all, calling an archangel the friend of a country boy was almost a sacrilege, and fighting the culprit thus became a holy duty.

He got up and started forward and in the next minute found himself at the other boy's side. Half a head taller, his enemy glanced down at Toni, his mocking glance changing to a friendly one. But driven by his fear of an older, heavier boy and by a strange intensity, Toni launched his attack. He moved back a step, then, quickly lowering his head, he drove it into the boy's stomach the way he had seen young steers assail their victims. In a minute they were surrounded by spectators whose cheers stimulated the battle. For a glorious moment Toni thought that he might be able publicly to defeat an older boy, but suddenly the kitchen door opened and Barbara, the boy's sister, flew out and threw herself upon Toni's adversary, showing her sharp little teeth. As she attacked her brother with her fists and nails, her cheeks turned crimson as though she had painted them with red ink.

Toni shivered, humiliated by a mere girl's interference. Mumbling dark prophesies of future battles, he wandered away from the village and the howling crowd and, choosing the main street, abandoned at this time of day, he headed toward the fields. What was wrong with wanting to become an angel, he defended himself stubbornly. He watched the sky so often and always thought it beautiful. He had seen it madonna-blue, as it was now, and he had seen it red, as though it were on fire. He had seen it at night when you

thought you could take a handful of stars down, and before a storm when lightning tore big rents in it. The boys, of course, thought it was a place only for women, who cared for nothing but prayers. But would God have made such a terrifically big vault if all He needed was space to pray?

If Toni could compose music like the music he had heard this morning he could make them understand that heaven was a fine place indeed. All the things a boy liked would be there, but more numerous and finer even than he knew them here, and you could do whatever you wanted and as long and often as you wanted. That's why it is heaven. He, for instance, could sit on top of a cloud and play his violin day and night without being yelled at by his neighbors and told he was driving them crazy.

Toni sat down by the side of the road and absentmindedly began to pluck the grass growing along the edge. He was not happy at all. First of all he should not have given that silly answer at school. He winced at the thought of the boys' banter. He could not blame them. Just imagine himself, a big hulk of a boy with black hair and a large hook nose—even if the latter was handed down to him by the Romans, as Miss Greti said—trying to fly across the classroom! Secondly he should not have picked a fight. It was a bad thing to do. And that Barbara! He wished she were not a girl and then he could thrash her soundly. Whenever something happened to him, she acted as though she were his mother. Thirdly there was Miss Greti's little sermon and at the thought of the promise he had given her, he felt a feeling of change and loss that seemed almost unbearable.

He picked a juicy blade of grass, fitted it between his two thumbs, leaving a narrow split through which the air could pass, and blew sadly into it. To his surprise and delight a sound came out, clear and high. He tried it again and could hardly believe his ears. This sound was just as true and powerful as the first. Attentively, he listened to the noises around him: the dry rustling of the corn, the tender lowing of the cows, the many-voiced chorus of the birds. He would have died gladly in order to be able to imitate these sounds. He missed the fine strings of his violin and the thought that it might lose its tone, if left silent too long, worried him. What good would it do to go to heaven if his instrument were to lose its power of music?

Perhaps when an angel played on it . . . he mused, when suddenly his ears, attuned to the accustomed noises, became conscious of a sharp staccato rhythm. With the instinct of the country-bred, Toni moved off the road and watched. His immobility seemed to make him one with the bushes in which he hid.

Soon the snorting of horses and the clanking of spurs filled the air. A fine-looking horseman, followed by two others, came around the curve of the road. The riders wore blue uniforms with white and gold stripes on their trousers. Their faces were laughing and happy. Behind them two horses as white as snow trotted on dancing hoofs, pulling the most beautiful carriage Toni had ever seen. The rich manes streamed in the breeze of the horses' speed. Their leather trappings were as shiny as though made of silver. A very old gentleman sat in the carriage, a black skull cap on his white

hair. He looked out of the window like a good-natured squire, concerned about the welfare of his tenants. Suddenly a great warmth welled up in Toni's heart, as recognition dawned upon him. "Der Kaiser," he breathed, speechless with awed delight. He, Toni Bruckner, had seen the emperor! Nothing else mattered. Whether the boys teased him or not, he had seen the Kaiser, the most important person in the country, the first person in the world almost, second only to the Pope.

Another carriage rolled by. The coachman, high up on his bench, cracked his whip and sang: "We're going to Maria Zell, all the way to Maria Zell!" and his moustache bristled with joy.

So the Kaiser was going through Ansfelden because he was on a pilgrimage. Toni's longing to go with him to the holy place made the boy step forward. They waved at him then, the beautiful horsemen, laughing and shouting. Their gaiety and brightness were reflected in the landscape around: the waving fields, the abundant pastures, the madonna-blue sky. "Maria Zell," Toni whispered. He wanted to run after the happy procession, but all he could see now was a cloud of dust. He wanted to fly over the hamlets and little towns, over the hills and the snow-covered mountains until he could stand panting before Our Lady in her pilgrims' church. "I hurt all over, I love you so much," he would say. And she would gently answer: "But I hurt too, Toni. I hurt because I love so much. Real love always brings pain."

On his way home, Toni whistled again. But now in the melody he chose it was all there: the serenity of the sky, the

gaiety of boy-angels, the richness of the earth which is only a reflection of the bountifulness of heaven.

He stopped short, remembering Miss Greti's request only to whistle melodies she knew. "I don't even know that one myself," he muttered and then chuckled.

I.

2.

In June 1837, Toni and his mother struggled up the steep village road leading to St. Florian.

"Do I have to go to that monastery?" Toni asked once more.

"Yes, Toni," his mother said patiently, avoiding his pleading eyes.

"Why do you want me to become a choir-boy?"

"Why, why, why!" Mother Bruckner scolded him gently. "You asked the same question two years ago, when your father sent you to cousin Weiss to study music with him. And later you were glad." She took hold of his coarse woolen sleeve, grasping it tightly, as though he were a criminal who might try to escape. For a moment Toni did not know what to do. He felt all wound up inside and ready to burst.

He had worked very hard these last weeks of his father's illness. He had risen every day at four to ring the new day in. It was cold at that hour in winter. There was no other cold like it. Your eyes watered and the tears turned to ice

on your cheeks. Your feet in the stiff and frozen shoes grew blistered and sore, and at times you groped your way through the driving whiteness, and for all you could see, you might have been in China. But he did not really mind these hardships. He was proud to be the one to awaken the country people, and if the skin of his palms did stick to the icy ropes, what of that! The bells only rang twice as proudly.

No, Toni did not mind little things like playing dance music in the inn until he was dizzy from all the whirling around him and so hot from fiddling that he had to go out into the yard and bathe his face in the ice-cold water from the trough. He did not mind going out at night to make sick calls with the priest. He was proud of these duties, and he was even more proud of his success in school. For six months, although he was only thirteen years old, he had been teaching the village children and maintaining an iron discipline. And even if their obedience was due to his stronger muscles, he still had done a good job.

What hurt him now was that right after his father's death the authorities were turning him out as though he had failed. Even the pastor had let him down. And he had seemed so fond of him when at night Toni used to run over to help him take off his high, heavy boots. "Tonerl," he had often said, "I'm not a rich farmer who can afford a body servant," or "My, my, you make me feel as though I belonged to the aristocracy!" Toni, turning a furious red—to his great shame he blushed easily—had thought that for him the parson did belong to the aristocracy, for him he was a prince of God. And now he too had let him down!

"Couldn't we stay in Ansfelden?" Toni asked.

"What about the new teacher? He will want to move into our house."

"What about him! They could send him away! It's he or I," Toni said, "but I'm the former teacher's son and that makes it different altogether. What is so special about teaching, anyway? A child can do it."

They can't send him away. Just like that—they can't, his mother said. And the new teacher was single, while the Bruckners were a whole family. It did not seem at all fair.

"Why can't they send the new teacher away?"

"I can't talk while I'm climbing," Toni's mother said with a little sigh of exasperation, and, of course, Toni knew the answers to his questions, anyway. The community had been lenient enough, letting him take care of the school for half a year, and if just anyone at all were able to teach, they wouldn't hold preparatory classes in Linz to train men for the teaching career.

The boy looked sideways at his mother. She was not beautiful. Her clothes were covered with dust and stained with sweat, her black boots almost gray, her face swollen and her eyes red from crying. But her expression was resolute and he knew he could not change her and with this knowledge and the realization of her firmness came his respect. There was no other woman like his mother. His father had died only a few hours before and already she had made her simple calculations and was acting according to the results. Toni was going to St. Florian. The religious fathers had to take him. With the largest mouth gone, she could manage. She would

move to Ebelsfeld where she could live more cheaply, while finding better opportunities for work. And by taking in washing, she would manage to raise the girls. Then too in Ebelsfeld she would be closer to Toni than in Ansfelden.

Toni was very tired, but his mother was tired too. Weary from the day's emotions she climbed the hot country road and the uneven cobble stones hurt her feet even more than they hurt his own. He need not make things harder for her. He walked on silently, his heart heavy and his legs stiff. He had gone perhaps twenty more steps, when he stopped short. "Look," he shouted. "Look, Mother!"

At the far end of the road, upon a hill, like an enchanted castle, remote and radiant, stood the monastery. Inside Toni's chest a knot seemed to untie. That convent looked as big as a whole town. With its wrought-iron gargoyles, its rows and rows of windows, as rhythmical as bars of music, and its two steeples rising above the roof like a symbol of faith, the building was a delight to the eye. A quick fervor stirred Toni's blood. Here he could sing and play for the glory of God!

"Stop running, Toni," his mother gasped. "I'm all out of breath."

He checked his stride then, but his eyes eagerly scanned the picture before him. As they mounted the highway, they began to see less and less of the establishment as a whole, and finally only the tremendous white façade shimmered between the huge elm trees. Toni's heart beat almost painfully as his mother raised the heavy iron knocker. A moment later the stone gate swung open, slowly, majestically.

Beyond the gate was a fish pond in the middle of a vast

court. Small, golden fish darted this way and that. Toni was sorry he could not stay and watch them, but his mother already stood at the entrance door. The gatekeeper who admitted them, smiled at them kindly from beneath his bushy eyebrows, and the numerous wrinkles in his face deepened. "I think you have chosen the wrong door," he said. "We distribute the lunches at the north entrance."

"We haven't come for lunch, Sir," Frau Bruckner said, and Toni was glad to hear that she did not sound offended.

There was a pause. "You want to go to confession, perhaps?"

Toni's mother shook her head. Then, abruptly, she said: "I'd like to see the biggest priest in the monastery. The one who has the final say in all matters. I've come a long way, from Ansfelden, you see, and my errand is very important."

Toni reddened at the thought that it was his little unimportant personality which his mother was bringing to the center of attention. But the good brother smiled. "It must be of importance if you came all the way from Ansfelden," he said, and, flashing Toni a quick, reassuring smile, "Come this way, please," he said, and they stepped over the threshold.

Their heavy boots made a great clatter in the otherwise quiet corridors. Giddily, Toni mounted a staircase so white and lofty it seemed to float away from under his steps. Flowers and grapes were sculptured on the railing, the ceiling—everywhere—and their beauty made his heart feel light and joyous in his chest.

The good brother led them to a vast room and asked them to sit down in high, straight-backed, cushioned chairs. From

where Toni sat, he could see a whole series of breath-taking rooms, such as he had seen nowhere else before. Though they were empty, a strange joyousness seemed to flow through them as though they were filled with organ music.

"Sit still," Frau Bruckner said, as a door opened, "and hide your dirty finger-nails."

The gate-keeper came back and placed a huge dish of scrambled eggs before them, enough for the meal of an entire family. Then he placed a basket on the table and, removing the white napkin which covered it, said: "Just look at these big strawberries. They're from our own garden."

Toni's mouth watered. Without thinking, he reached for the berries, but his mother's voice harshly reprimanded him. "You haven't said grace!"

He folded his hands quickly and looked up at the holy picture on the wall, and suddenly his palms became covered with cold sweat. He did not recognize the holy man portrayed there. What if the father—the 'biggest in the house'—were to ask him?

"Mother," he pleaded, pulling her sleeve, but she glanced at him severely, and, while he joined her in the prayer, he realized with a sudden smile of understanding that she surely knew the answer as little as he knew it himself, and his nervousness seemed easier to bear.

The gate-keeper had left them, and Toni applied himself hungrily to the eggs. His mother ate slowly, watching him over her spoon. "Leave a bit on your plate," she said sternly. "Don't let them think you have no manners."

Meanwhile from the most distant room, the tall stout figure of a priest could be seen approaching. He walked calm and erect, with quiet dignity. Toni's excitement grew as the distance between them diminished. He wished his mother had not asked for the 'biggest' but for the lowliest man in the house—the gardener, the sexton, some one of their own kind. With sharp awareness he remembered that he was wearing his father's Sunday coat which hung loosely on his shoulders and was tight around his waist. The appearance of the priest matched the magnificence of the rooms. When he reached them, Toni's heart was in his throat, ready to leap out.

But the priest, stopping in front of Toni, smiled, and his brown eyes were kind. He looked at him as a farmer might look at a piece of land, wondering which crop it would be suitable for. In fact, the priest looked like a farmer himself, strong and dignified, yet, strangely enough, he seemed to belong to the splendor that surrounded him. His build corresponded in strength to that of the house, his eyes had the gaiety of the high, light rooms, and there was something about his manner which promised the richness yet simplicity which characterized the sculptures. Yes, the priest fitted in.

"Well, my good woman," he turned to Mutter Bruckner, "I was told you wanted the 'biggest' man."

Frau Bruckner smiled, overjoyed to be able to present her request to one so kind. She was still smiling, though less perceptibly, when he went on, "I'm six feet tall. Is that big enough?"

"I must speak to the Superior of the house. I must!" Mother Bruckner pleaded.

The priest smiled again. "I *am* the Superior," he said. He put an arm around Toni's shoulder. "I think they picked me for size." And then in his way, half serious, half joking, the priest asked Frau Bruckner what she wished.

Toni's mother spoke haltingly at first. She was little used to talking. But, by and by, her words came more fluently, more persuasively, as she pleaded with the priest to accept her son as a choir-boy. If this were to happen, Toni felt, his life, after a six months' struggle as a teacher, would return to the path of its original destiny. He felt like a young river that had wandered off and was now returning to the mother-stream.

From somewhere, faint music floated into the room. Toni stifled a sigh. He would have to leave this wonderful place as soon as his voice changed, and new struggles and decisions would be his again. Would it not be better to forego this short sojourn in a place so like Paradise? He thought with a certain envy of his friends, whose lives were normal and smooth, who would follow the professions they had chosen, who would become soccer players, prize-fighters, fishermen.

"He is a bright boy," Toni heard his mother say. "It's just that to-day he isn't quite himself. Just imagine! He fainted at his father's deathbed! A strong boy like that, who's never even had a day's sickness. And he is used to seeing men die, being out with the priest so much."

The thought of his father who would have fitted so perfectly into these surroundings, brought up a big lump in Toni's throat. He looked at the black-clad woman at his

side. Her rough, chapped hands were working nervously in her lap. She was good and kind, but Toni had been closer to his father, the musician. He had been part of him. Toni felt hot tears rise in his eyes. Quickly he turned to the window and looked out at the countryside.

For a moment he stood in a kind of stupor, then the beauty of the picture before him began to take effect. From where he stood he could see the village of Saint Florian. The road dropped down toward the river Enns through a double row of neat houses. He loved the gentle, wood-covered hills and the rich plain was an invitation to the eye. There bloomed the flax in light blue, the rape in radiant yellow; the undulating wheat fields were sprinkled with crimson poppies; the meadows were a luscious green and the good sun, shining over it all, made the whole landscape bright. The monastery itself reigned like a spiritual fortress over the village, and Toni felt very proud to be standing at one of its windows, looking down upon the enormous yards, the peaceful cemetery with its white crosses. Everything here gleamed in the sunlight. Even death was no longer a matter of fear or pain. In the sparkling window glass, Toni's eye caught the Superior's, and the two exchanged a smile of perfect understanding. Toni turned and went over to stand beside his mother.

"Well, young man, and how do you like it here?"

"I think it's a gay place to be in. Almost like heaven," Toni said.

Frau Bruckner raised imploring hands to the priest. "Oh, dear God," she cried. "You must forgive the boy, Father. He isn't his own self to-day."

To her surprise the Superior chuckled. "But I think it a gay place myself," he said. Then he went over to the window, pulling Toni with him. He showed him the Enns River and told him of Saint Florian, who had died a martyr, scourged and flayed on its bank, his blood staining the water red. He told Toni the history of the town, how a little church had been built in honor of this Saint, and how, gradually, houses had been built up around this church, and the community started. "You look a little like Saint Florian yourself, you know, with your big Roman nose," he said, comparing Toni's face with the picture on the wall. Toni and his mother exchanged meaningful glances, as they learned who the man was in the painting.

"Now," the Superior said, "let's see what this great musician can do."

"I left my violin at home," Toni said quickly.

The priest scrutinized him. "Not too fond of music, are you, eh?"

Toni felt a pang of anguish at the thought of being rejected. It was hard for him to keep silent, but after the promise he had given to Miss Greti, he had no right to make a decision in favor of music. He might never find his way back to a teaching career, in which he could serve other people and be a help to his mother too.

The Superior fingered his big rosary. "We have two boys here already. It would be nice to have another one, if he can sing and if he loves music. If he doesn't, it's a waste of his time and ours. If you just need a shelter for him, another place might be as good as this one."

The priest did not look at Toni, yet the boy felt he was being examined minutely, and he was careful to keep his face under control. He hid his struggle in a silence that bristled with the spirit of sacrifice.

Then they actually passed through that flight of lovely rooms that were hung with beautiful tapestry. Toni could hardly absorb all the beauty he saw. There were clocks of all sizes and shapes, with big pendulums moving slowly from left to right, mirrors that showed you yourself from your hair to the upturned tips of your shoes; quartz crystals brought from the mountains; butterflies of many colors. Finally they came to a plain brown door, and there they stopped.

"These are our quarters," the Superior smiled. "And they aren't fancy at all, nor are they accessible to visitors."

"Where do these stairs lead to?" Toni wanted to know, startled by a mysterious, tomb-like coldness coming from the staircase that led to the floor below.

"These lead to the catacombs," the priest explained and told the boy of the ruins of an old Gothic church and of the thousands of skeletons which had been found in the neighborhood and buried there. "Since all the skulls were split," he finished, "it was assumed that they remained from a battle with the Avares."

Such gruesomeness so close to so much beauty made a deep impression upon Toni's heart. "Could we go down?" he asked shyly, and, smiling, the Superior complied with his wish.

On the narrow stairway, Mother Bruckner tried to stay

near the priest to remind him of her request. Apparently she did not like the little excursion to the catacombs at all. "You'll be surprised how beautifully Toni sings," she said persuasively. "When he sang the *Tantum Ergo* in church, people prayed twice as well." Toni flushed a deep dark-red, and sent appealing glances in her direction.

He shuddered when, walking through the dark, winding corridors, he saw sarcophagi in alcoves, and huge wooden coffins, bearing the names of deceased fathers, immured in the tremendous walls. How closely life and death were united in this place, and on top of these catacombs was the convent, and on top of the convent the church, symbol of the life eternal.

"You'll be sorry if you don't take my Toni in," Frau Bruckner continued her terrible plea. "You can't get another boy as musical as he is. It'll be your own loss."

In sudden rebellion, Toni let out a loud shout, that echoed from the vaulted ceiling, from the thick layers of brick and the carved sarcophagi.

"Oh, my good Lord in Heaven!" Mutter Bruckner cried out. "You must forgive the boy, Father. He doesn't know what he is doing!" But with something like rough tenderness the Superior pulled Toni's hair, the way his father might have done, and without another word took him up to the church and then climbed higher to the choir loft.

When the priest let his fingers creep over the organ keys, Toni's breast overflowed with contentment. He had never heard anything like that. This organ contained every tone that he knew. From the soft whistle of the birch-bark flute

to the trumpet of the Judgment Day, every sound was there. Toni's heart leaped. He stepped forward and took in the view of the church: the black marble pulpit, the broad altars, the second smaller organ. To let his voice ring out here over the incense and the swinging candelabras, dear Lord, what happiness! He hardly knew he was singing. His heart was rejoicing in his chest.

"All right," the priest said, after a while. "You're accepted, son! You've still got a lot to learn, but the material is good, and I don't mean the voice alone. Your mother was right to bring you."

Soon it was settled that he should go back with Mutter Bruckner to help her with the moving, and return to the convent at the end of July.

When they walked back down the steep road, Toni asked his mother a question he had always meant to ask.

"Didn't father miss me terribly those two years when I was away, studying music with cousin Weiss?"

Mutter Bruckner loosened her black handkerchief. "He missed you a lot, and your help too," she said.

"Why did he send me away then?"

"Because he loved you, of course."

"What about you?"

"I'll miss you too," she said.

"Then why do you insist on my leaving you?"

She tightened her kerchief again. "I hope I can get you a better violin soon," she said. "You haven't been playing lately at all."

So she had known all the time. A simple woman, country-

born and country-bred, she had always understood. A teacher's wife, harassed with work, not used to much conversation, she had assembled all her courage and asked for the 'biggest man' in the monastery, and then she had persuaded him to take Toni in. Because she knew what music meant to her son! And Toni had never spoken to her about it, just to his father. He had a strange sensation now, a feeling of deep, grateful, protective love. Silently, he repeated the vow he had made to Miss Greti three years before. He would become a teacher, so that he could take the burden of the household from her shoulders. As a choir-boy he would try to get as much education as he could, and then, as soon as he lost his high boy's voice, he would go to Linz to take a teacher's course.

"I shall become a teacher. I must become a teacher," he said to himself.

I.

3.

Four years later, early in October, Toni Bruckner stepped out of the horse-car which had brought him from Linz to Windhaag, a tiny village at the Bohemian border. He put his small trunk down and looked eagerly around. This was the place for his first teaching assignment, and he thrilled with expectation.

The streets were quite empty, but this was to be expected

at noontime. What struck him as strange, however, was that the landscape too had a vacant look, and when the horses' heads were swung around, and the conductor had reversed the destination board to show the terminus Linz, Toni felt as though he were being left alone somewhere near the end of the world. It was surprising how, after travelling a mere two hours, you could come upon a countryside so entirely different from the one you had known. The meadows and fields here were sparsely grown with grass and grain. The ground, bare in spots, lacked the vigorous brown color of the fertile earth at home. He wondered about the character of a people whose native soil gave so grudgingly of the necessities of life.

Thoughtfully he picked up his satchel, and with his violin case under the same arm, set out on his search for the schoolhouse. A sharp wind was blowing, tugging at his wide trousers, whistling around his ears. With his free hand he held on to his broad-rimmed black hat. This was almost like a winter storm at home. But his people could always look forward to the blessings of the milder seasons, to abundant crops, crystal clear fall days and the indescribably gentle months of spring.

As he went past the whitewashed houses, with his body still bent against the driving wind, he noticed with some surprise that all the windows were heavily curtained and the doors tightly closed. No friendly faces greeted the passer-by. A little girl, leaning over a garden fence, stared at him, but even at his cheerful 'Gruess Gott' her little face remained guarded, as though a veil hung over it. And yet,

in Ansfelden even the Kaiser had smiled at Toni from behind a sparkling carriage window.

The sight of a little church soon warmed his heart. Quickly he stepped inside. "Dear God," he said, kneeling down at the last bench. "I thank You for all the riches You have given me. I never even realized before how much I have had. I never knew." His eyes focused with pity upon the sober altar, where no flowers, no rich embroideries adorned the table of Our Lord. There must be something still growing out in the woods, he reflected, and even if it were only a few green weeds, or dried-up berries on elderbushes, they would lend some color to the church.

"You know what, dear God," he said, "let's make it a bargain. I'll take care of Your church and You'll take care of me." He remembered then that, since this was his first time in this church, he could have three wishes. It was not difficult to think of the first two. He wanted, of course, to be of use to the community, and he should have liked God to watch over his family at home. But when he came to the third wish he was confused. It had to be something to do with music, but he did not quite know what. If he asked God to take away his love for music, then, at the end of time, he would not have accomplished anything, and, on Judgment Day, the Good Lord would say: What did you do, rascal, with the talent I lent you? On the other hand, if he asked to be allowed to pour out his heart through his music and to reach other hearts with it, he might spend too much time at it, as he had done before, at the cost of his major duties. I'll let it go for a while, he thought. God isn't likely

to forget that I have still one wish coming to me. He dipped his finger into the holy-water basin and, crossing himself, left the church.

Outside, the sky looked like a gray wall of stone. But the little schoolhouse across the street was shining white, and on the door was the number seven. Seven was Mutter Bruckner's favorite number. In fact you could have anything from her, if you had sense enough to use the number seven before it—seven apples, seven cookies, even seven dumplings when you were specially hungry. Thinking of his mother, Toni became just a little bit homesick.

"Stay a good boy, Tonerl," she had told him as he left, "so that you may please the Lord." At the memory of these words, Toni felt his third wish formulated clearly in his mind. "Let me please You, dear God," he thought, "and if it's at all possible, let me please You through my music."

With his three wishes in God's keeping, Toni felt quite relieved. He pulled the bell rope at the schoolhouse and a thin, sickly-looking woman in a gray dress opened the door.

"You are Toni Bruckner, I suppose," she said, looking him carefully up and down. "Come in, Herr Hecht is expecting you."

Toni entered the dark, narrow hall—a big, clumsy boy, carrying a satchel, a violin case and a broad, crumpled hat. Small wonder he stepped on the woman's foot. What a bad start, he thought, as he heard her groan, and, a bit uneasy, he followed her into the living-room.

Herr Hecht was sitting before a narrow table. Although he too was a school-teacher, he did not resemble Toni's

father at all. He was perhaps not much more than five years older than Toni, but his pale, intelligent face, and sharp eyes, set closely together above a thin nose, were full of unshakable authority.

"You are late," he said over a heaping spoon, and the whole room was filled with the delicious smell of smoked ham and sauerkraut. "I had hoped you would be here for your morning classes."

"I'm sorry," Toni said meekly. "In Ansfelden, the little children had their lessons in the afternoon. I thought it would be the same here." He had been quite sure he would be on time, by taking the second horse-car from Linz after the early morning mass.

"In Ansfelden, in Ansfelden," Herr Hecht mocked him. "You're in Windhaag now, and we do things my way here." He chewed slowly, carefully, as though he wished to make the most of each bite, and all the while his pale blue eyes were studying Toni minutely.

"You needn't pay me for to-day then," Toni said quickly, blushing.

"I would not think of such a thing," Herr Hecht answered. "With the salary I receive, I cannot afford to throw money away. Well, at least you are husky. I need a strong assistant who can help me on my farm as well as in school."

For a moment Toni felt the bitterness in his mouth. What a miser this man must be! But then, I'm unreasonable, he thought. Haven't I seen for myself how poor this village is, and don't I know that it takes hard work and scrimping to make both ends meet? He looked at his big hands, hands that

were used to working in the earth, powerful, viselike hands. "I'm used to farm work," he said simply.

"You seem young for a graduate of a preparatory school." Hecht's glance had lost some of its severity and his manner was now that of an adult showing forbearance with a child.

Toni's face grew red in spite of himself. "I'm seventeen," he said. "I took two courses in one year at the Teachers' College in Linz, and by good luck and also because I had six months' teaching experience, I managed to pass the examination."

At this point Hecht made an indignant protest. "What do you mean, you took two courses in one year? You evidently believe you can absorb knowledge in pill form. Oh, dear God," he cried in injured tones. "I see I shall have to train you myself. You must understand that I am concerned about the progress of the children." His voice became annoyingly patient. "You'll have to sit in my classes in the afternoons to see how proper teaching is done."

"I shall be only too pleased," Toni said. "Truly, I'm most anxious to learn."

"And what else can you do besides fiddling on that?" Hecht asked, motioning toward the violin case, which Toni was still nervously grasping in his hands.

"Oh, I can play the organ too," Toni said eagerly, smiling with pride and anticipation.

"Well, well, we'll see," Hecht said. "Go into the kitchen now and have your meal with the servant."

At the mention of food Toni felt his mouth beginning to water. He had found it difficult to look directly at Hecht

and his wife while they ate that delicious ham, pink inside and brown outside. Toni was a strong boy with heavy bones, a deep chest and a hearty appetite. He needed a lot of food to keep up his strength. It was pleasant to hear the crackle of the wood in the old iron stove and see the flames rise through the open ring when the girl moved the pot.

"You'd better take your violin over to your room," she said. "Come, I'll show you the way."

The thin-walled porch which had been made into a bedroom was as bare as a barn.

"It's a shame," the maid muttered. "He," she motioned toward the living-room, "even took the picture out. A lovely picture with a waterfall."

Toni would not miss the picture with the waterfall. Since the nail was still in the wall, he could hang up the picture of the Madonna his mother had packed, and it would be a little bit of home.

"You look just like the Roman soldier on a coin I have," the maid said when they were back in the kitchen, "the same high nose, high cheekbones, same chin." Her conversation flowed on like a bubbling brook. It would make a nice accompaniment for an allegro melody, Toni mused. But his father had never approved of his day-dreaming. Often he had shaken him and said, "Before all art comes love for your fellow-men." But his scolding had not done a mite of good then, for Toni, minutes later was off again. Now, however, he wished he had paid more attention to his family. But it was not so bad listening to the maid. While he helped himself to a large portion of sauerkraut, she told him of the long

winter in Windhaag, of the mounds of snow in the streets and on the roofs, and soon he could almost hear the jingling of snow bells, the crisp noise of footsteps on newly fallen snow—all gay staccato tunes.

"Yes?" he said startled, and glanced sheepishly at Hecht, whose presence he had recognized only as a vague disturbance. "Why," he went on with eagerness, "of course, I'm ready."

It was exciting to sit in the humming schoolroom at the desk Herr Hecht had put up beside his table. Before him Toni found a box of quills he had to shape as writing utensils for his students. He was glad there was something to occupy his big fingers which he never quite knew what to do with unless he could allow them to creep over the black and white organ keyboard or press their strong, broad tips upon the violin strings. As he cut the quills in half and freed the upper ends of the feathers with his pocketknife, his eyes were upon the children. The youngsters seemed to be cast in the image of their barren land. It was almost as though fog, silence and loneliness had molded their characters and made them tight-lipped and withdrawn.

He opened the memorandum book Herr Hecht had supplied and, using a pencil and a ruler he found in the desk, he drew five straight lines. The small round note heads were quickly sketched, and, even now, while he was still writing the song for them, Toni could see a group of children, the older ones leading the younger ones by the hand, dancing in gay circles around the trees.

If the village and its people were different, the crops

poorer, the plains wider and lonelier, still life in Windhaag was not so entirely strange after all. In fact, the details of Toni's daily existence had scarcely changed at all. So Toni thought when, next morning, he went over to the church to ring in the new day. The birds greeted him, singing or screeching each according to its kind, and even a little hare crossed his path. But the big bell that hung from a church beam had a monotonous sound, and the people who passed by looked dispirited, and not even the glow of the tinted church window gave brightness to their impassive faces. Vaguely Toni felt that seeking a spiritual contact with these people might bring himself a step closer to the Lord. The idea pleased him a great deal and, throbbing with enthusiasm, he made his plans.

As soon as he had rung the bell, he set out for a walk across the hilly plateau in search of plants for the church. The rushes grew tall and stiff and their dry spears rustled in the wind. In the distance a barren mountain seemed to enclose this part of the world and isolate it from the rest. There were no flowers to be seen anywhere, yet the landscape had color. The boulders, covered with low lichens, gleamed in pale violet, and white birches lifted their delicate, rust-colored crowns.

Toni sat down on a knoll and took in the spirit of the land: the dramatic gloom of the rocks, the cold silence of the lonely expanse. He heard the bitter lament of a tortured world in a dark, stirring music that rose in crescendo to a mighty climax, then abruptly stopped, leaving a pause that was filled with silence and fog. I must fight this desolation,

I must conquer this loneliness, he thought. Suddenly the music could be heard again, lashing out against the wind in sforzando chords, breaking up the fog with furious octave runs and tearing it to shreds. Gay little trills assailed the dark mountain chain, contorted and magnified by black clouds, and soon a low, pulsing echo sprang from the throbbing stone. A strong music was required to bring life back to this impassive land.

Toni jumped to his feet. Some day I'll let a sweet spring melody grow from this storm motif, he resolved, but now I've got work to do. He made an effort to pull himself together, for the various melodies still sounded in his head like a muted thunderstorm. But running against the wind helped. It required all his strength and energy. Toni enjoyed the quick movement and the feel of cold air on his cheeks. He made his way over stones and boulders and in a short while he stood beside a clear stream. From the bubbling waters rose the odor of moss and spruce needles and coldness. This was a charming place, this divide, where the river collected its waters to lead them down to the Moldau and the Elbe. Overhanging the water, Toni found what he had come for, a bush with glossy leaves and red berries that looked like the Bishop-barrets at home. He gathered an armful, then, running and jumping, he made his way back.

When he arrived at the church door, he suddenly looked down at his mud-spattered boots. Why, he couldn't possibly enter the church as dirty as all that. There was no time to clean up, but in his valise was a pair of red boots he had worn as a choir-boy in several processions. Swiftly he ran

over to Herr Hecht's house and, careful not to wake anyone, changed his footwear and hurried back to the church. Behind the altar he found two vases containing ugly paper roses. These he threw out, filled the vases with the fresh, shining branches he had brought, and set them on the altar beside the brass candle-sticks. Then the first villagers began to arrive and he knew he would not be able to greet the priest in person. He would welcome him instead with organ chords.

When Toni placed his hands on the organ keys, he felt as though the organ itself were an altar—an altar of music. He remembered the broad foundations of the monastery at Saint Florian and with the thought that strength comes from strength, he began his theme for the mass. It was a ponderous theme that would have suited a procession of bishops walking with measured steps. But, as he played on, some of the cheerful breezes that always swept through the convent sang through his music, and the spirit of the good fathers who had rejoiced in beauty and in the good, clean things of this world made itself heard. He brought together the most beautiful harmonies to praise the Lord in a magnificent *Gloria*. During the *Credo* his notes sang of the faithful who had carried the banner of the Cross into the land of the infidel. At the *Sanctus* he let the organ intone the jubilant chorus of children exulting over Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem. Hosannah! Hosannah! Toward the end of the mass he returned to the opening motif, thus rounding out the ethical concept of his faith. From the choir loft the belief theme of the *Credo* rained down like a blessing upon the bent heads in the nave.

For a moment Toni sat in ecstasy, then he looked down into the church, and when he saw some of the worshippers turn their heads and look up at him with surprise and approval clearly expressed in their faces, his heart sang. He smiled to himself, thinking how pleased the pastor would be to meet him after hearing his music. But in the sacristy, the elderly priest looked at him reproachfully.

"What in the world did you think you were doing?" he wanted to know. "First you play so long an introduction that I had to repeat the prayers at the steps of the altar three times before you were through, then you shifted to a round song as though the church were a dance hall at carnival time. And who told you you could wear red shoes to church? Haven't you any respect, boy?"

Toni gazed at his red boots, so offensive on the cold bare floor, and the old man went on: "Besides, who gave you permission to play at all? Look at me," he said plaintively, "I can hardly raise my arm to-day with my rheumatism worse than ever. Didn't anybody tell you you must help me dress?"

"I'm sorry, I didn't know," Toni said miserably.

Carefully, so as not to hurt him, Toni helped the priest remove his vestments, but when the latter still moaned with his pain, Toni thought of Christ Who had suffered so much more in silence. On the way home, his mind was filled with bitter, rebellious thoughts. A priest was supposed to be the representative of God. But God surely would not blame you when you made a mistake only because you did not know better. And not a word had been said about Toni's branches and berries!

Toni was downcast. Only now did he realize how much

he had counted on the priest's becoming his friend. He felt as though everyone had abandoned him and he was afraid of his first day of teaching. At thirteen, when he had first taken charge of a class, everything had seemed so easy, but now he was afraid that he might not guide the children properly.

But in the classroom his mood changed swiftly. Facing his pupils, he felt as thrilled as an explorer, a discoverer. He wished the gift of tongues had been given to him, but it seemed that God had deprived him of all medium of communication save that of music. I must try, he told himself. An artist is just like a piece of jewelry; it's nice to have it, but you can do without it. I must be humble and try to be of use to my fellow-men in the ordinary ways, instead of depending on my music.

Toni found the next few weeks very difficult. The fact was that he might have established a contact with the villagers had they not come to look upon him as a little strange, perhaps somewhat ridiculous. The children loved to hear him tell them of the universe. He had drawn them a globe on the big blackboard. Then, when he turned around quickly, he was able to catch their small faces open, without guile, their eyes wide and luminous with wonder. And the adults had remarked that they could pray much better when the young teacher improvised on the organ. But lately the children had started to giggle behind his back, and once a farmer had stopped him in the street to tell him he should know better than to teach the children such nonsense as that the earth was round and turned on its axis, because

anyone would know that if that were true the oceans would spill over.

Herr Hecht took care that there were many chores to be done, but he seldom said a kind word and did nothing to stimulate Toni's mind or satisfy his hunger for spiritual things. Moodily, the boy did his duties on the farm, with the lowest and the dirtiest work always falling to his share. He had to clean out the stable, make the hotbeds for the flower bulbs, and take the dung to the fields in a wheelbarrow. If time permitted, he had to split kindling for the maid. For a while bitterness seemed to take hold of his heart, then he realized that if his mind were not at peace, his music would leave him too. "Oh, confound it!" he would say to himself, "that lovely tune I had this morning—it's gone!" He would try to recreate the same situation: he had come out of the barn, on the alder bush a thistle-finch had sat, sending its white treble heavenward, from the stable had come the low rumbling bass of the cows . . . It was no use. These melodies had gone for good.

It was then that he decided always to carry some notepaper with him. It would be easy, he thought, to hide it beneath his hatband. But they had seen him, they had watched him stopping on his way across the fields to jot down his melodies. He is a crazy fool, they would say, and if he did not hear them, the maid was sure to repeat their words. From her he knew too that the villagers were worried lest they might have to pay for a new organ, for Herr Hecht had hinted that Toni was surely smashing the instrument with all the noise he made when he played.

Toni was so lonely at times that he wanted to cry out aloud. The daily morning walk between four and six was his only recreation. He was glad he had his Madonna picture, and of course, he knew that God and the Saints would never abandon him. Nevertheless, he would have liked a few friends on this earth too.

Then, one afternoon, in Herr Hecht's class, his heart leaped with excitement, when he noticed on the chin of a tall, lanky fellow the mark that comes from holding a violin. He knew the boy, Franz Spat; his small sister was in Toni's class. That evening, after so many months of abstinence, Toni took his violin case out of the old chest in his room. Herr Hecht had just sat down to dinner and would not notice Toni's departure.

In front of the Spats' home, Toni teetered nervously from one foot to the other. Herr Hecht would be offended if he knew Toni was going to call on one of his students, but he would not try to wean Franz away. At last the fear that his superior might accidentally come out and see him made Toni decide to enter the Spats' home. Clutching the violin like an anchor in a stormy sea, and with his heart pounding in his chest, he knocked shyly on the door.

For a moment, as Frau Spat fumbled with the lock, he heard waves of sound breaking over him and he grinned foolishly with pleasure. Never good at words, he simply walked in, took his stand beside Franz, who was practising his part in a duet, picked up the tune of the second violin, and was soon fiddling away, and the other boy, smiling shyly, played on without interruption. And, as quickly and

smoothly as their duet developed, so their friendship sprang up and blossomed.

Several times they heard someone calling out to them, but, mumbling a vague reply, they both played on. They played for hours, neither of them tiring, until Frau Spat gripped their arms firmly and told them that she and the rest of the family had had enough. Moreover, there were doughnuts in the kitchen that could not be wasted. Toni's face broke into a broad smile. It was one of the nicest things to step into a warm kitchen, filled with the pleasant smell of delicious food, and to know that you were welcome there.

The kitchen clock said ten minutes to twelve, when he finally took his departure. Before he left, it was arranged that he should study with Franz every morning between four and six, for Franz, like Toni, wanted to become a teacher. In return for his tuition, Toni would have a good breakfast, piping hot coffee—at Herr Hecht's the coffee was not even warm—and Frau Spat would look after his clothes. The villagers would respect him more if he did not look like a gipsy.

Toni was in quite a different mood when he left the Spats. He settled his big black hat more firmly on his wavy brown hair and walked briskly home. As he tiptoed across the dining room he heard bare feet pad toward the porch, and at his door he ran into Herr Hecht.

"Why, you scoundrel, wherever have you been?" the teacher asked, and Toni did not like his sneering tone at all.

"Visiting with friends," he said curtly.

"What friends?" The glancing, suspicious look Herr

Hecht gave him startled Toni. What on earth was wrong with staying out a little longer, even if it was with one of Herr Hecht's students.

"Girl friends?"

As understanding dawned upon him, Toni turned a bright red. Cold sweat broke out on his forehead and he stared at the older man in horror. Then, without another word, he took hold of the doorknob.

It was just at this moment that Hecht caught sight of the violin. "So that's it," he said, seething with rage. "It's Franz you are after. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, trying to steal the only talented student I have."

Toni looked up in amazement. The innocent pleasure of playing with Franz seemed a greater crime to Herr Hecht than the immodest escapade of which he had seemed to suspect Toni. It was difficult to speak to him with the proper respect. "I don't intend to steal Franz from you. I'm playing with him for the fun of it," Toni said and quickly stepped into his room. If he were only a bit of a musician himself, he'd understand, he thought bitterly.

The next day he wanted to explain to Herr Hecht how lonely he had been, and how much the evening at the Spats had meant to him, but Hecht's icy silence froze his tongue. In fact, it was Toni himself who was in need of some explanations and it was Frau Spat who made the situation clear to him. Herr Hecht wanted to train Franz to become his assistant. He was jealous of Toni's musical talent and wanted to get rid of him so that Franz could take his place. But Franz did not want to stay in Windhaag all his life. He

meant to enroll in a preparatory course in Linz and seek a position in a larger town.

Every morning after this, in the deepest secrecy, Toni slipped over to the Spats' home to prepare Franz for the entrance examination in Linz. Herr Hecht, who continued to give Franz his violin lessons, knew nothing about all this. And then the early winter with its heavy snowfalls at first increased Toni's loneliness.

One morning, at the beginning of November, it began to snow. The snowflakes came down in slow, dancing steps, as light as feathers. Toni watched them a while through the window and his heart became gay. He was thinking of all the fun the children would have now, sleigh-riding or fighting pitched battles in the school yard. He even took two pieces of coal with him in his coat pocket, so sure was he that they were going to make a snowman after class. But to his surprise the children seemed as indifferent as ever. He told them tales of the happy winters at home in Ansfelden and that afternoon when he saw a few of them take their small sleighs on the slopes, he laughed out loud with relief. Later, when Herr Hecht's classes were over, the older boys came to the hills too. Some of them were almost Toni's age, but nobody asked him to join them. He stood watching—an authority whom nobody recognized.

He was so lost in misery that he put the priest's vestment on back to front. The poor old man, tortured by his gout even more than in dry weather, stumbled a few times during mass, and, when he genuflected, the vestment came up on his head.

That day Toni did not even visit the Spats, but instead went for a long walk to the divide. Even the birds seemed dispirited, fluttering about, uttering long-drawn, heart-rending cries. Toni took off his big black hat and stuffed the brim into his mouth, because he too felt like crying. Then, as the snowflakes fell softly on his bare head, he remembered the notepaper hidden beneath his hatband. It was crumpled a little, but he flattened it out and, leaning against a boulder, he began to write. Perhaps some day he could tell the world what loneliness was like.

The sky was overcast with dark clouds when he entered the schoolroom next morning, and he frowned. He remained standing at the door, urging the children to come in, because he feared a storm was approaching, and the last of them had hardly entered, when hail began to fall thickly, noisily, beating against the walls and hammering upon the thin roof. The oil lamp sputtered dangerously and, when Toni turned it off, the children sat, huddled in groups in the darkness. Strangely enough, Toni now became more sure of himself. He felt the hidden anxiety in the children's hearts and he spoke to them kindly. The hours went by fast, and at eleven the storm had let up, and even the sun had begun to shine. But in the afternoon it began to snow again. This time the snow was heavy, pressing upon the branches and roof tops. The few villagers in the street looked up worriedly, but all they could see was a great gray expanse. On the second day the snow came half-way up the sides of the houses. It was still deeper on the road where in normal times the horse-car connected Windhaag with the rest of the

world. But no horse could get through these snowdrifts. The village was isolated. There were no visitors, and no news could come through. Even certain staple foods ran short. Dampness crept into the dark houses, chilling the people to the heart.

Toni missed his walks to the divide, but still he felt that he was better off than the others, because he had his music. He heard music in all things: the falling snow, the dripping of the rain pipe, the snapping of branches, the creaking of the house door. He wanted to share his wealth. He wanted to take the music in his hands and carry it over to his neighbors to make them happier, to bring light into their dark homes. And then the abundance of his feeling expressed itself in a simple request: "Frau Spat," he said, "let Franz and me play for the villagers."

Frau Spat made him tell her of the cozy winter nights, and when she heard of the Rocka Roas, the gay social gatherings there in Ansfelden, she agreed to his plan. That same evening a big crowd was gathered in her living-room, dancing to the accompaniment of Toni's and Franz' violins. There was a huge dish of hot doughnuts on the table, as there used to be back home.

This new form of entertainment became increasingly popular and Toni's services were in great demand. If his reputation did not grow by leaps and bounds as Franz' did, it was because he always played the second fiddle. Toni did not care for fame, but he would have been very happy if somebody had asked him if he would like to dance. Sometimes when Franz had stopped playing and was waltzing by, his

face flushed, swinging one of the girls in his arms, Toni felt as though he were condemned to be an onlooker all his life. And once he asked Franz' little sister: "Are you having a good time?" and she answered, "Of course. And you?"—"I'm not," he said, "because you don't ask me to dance with you." The girl looked up at him with big round eyes. "I wouldn't ask the teacher to dance any more than I would ask the priest!"

Her answer left him startled. Did they all regard him as ordained? A priest of Music? he wondered.

"There's never been a nicer winter," they said, but by spring even the Spats had forgotten that it had been Toni who had introduced the Rocka Roas. It shouldn't matter, he told himself. The main thing was he had stirred them out of their lethargy and they were accessible now not to dance music alone but to friendship, neighborliness and all the softer emotions that accompany these.

He could not blame the Spats for not overflowing with gratitude for him. They had already done enough for him. Besides, they had their own troubles. Franz had just finished his studies and was ready to leave for Linz, but Herr Hecht had given the boy such unenthusiastic letters of recommendation that Franz would not even dare to approach an examiner. Toni decided to talk to the priest about it. The old man was strict but fair. Just as Toni had anticipated, the pastor wrote a wonderful letter for young Spat, and Franz, who was a bright boy and had really concentrated on his studies, passed the examination without any difficulty.

When Franz had departed for Linz, Toni went into the

barn and started to feed the cow, though he had already given her hay that morning. He wanted to be kind to someone who'd permit it. Then he went into the hothouse and let his fingers glide over the soft flower calices. "I'm lonesome," he said. "I wish Herr Hecht could think of something else besides money or his ambitions. Now with Franz gone, there isn't anybody left to talk to."

For a few days Toni could not bring himself to touch his music. His violin seemed mute with grief for the loss of a friend, but gradually he cheered up in the company of the children, pleased with the response he received from them. When he finally took his instrument out of its case, he had the feeling that one had to be an artist in order to be able to endure ridicule and neglect. Perhaps he was not meant for a life of music at all. Perhaps he had to go through so much unhappiness to learn to keep his place. But then, when he began to play, he felt something in his breast unknot. All his loneliness, shame and grief broke free, as his bow fiercely glided over the strings, and gradually peace came into his heart. "Whatever You want me to be, dear God," he thought. "As long as I'm worthy of Your choice."

The second winter in Windhaag was much more pleasant than the first. One of the villagers learned to play the harp, another the zither, and, once in a while, Franz came home on a visit and then the music went on all night.

Early one January morning, Toni took a wheelbarrow full of manure from the stable to the garden. The young maid watched him from the kitchen window as he was spreading the dung over the flower-beds with a pitchfork.

"Is there going to be a dance on Saturday?" she called to him.

"Why, yes," he said uncertainly, not knowing why she asked such unnecessary questions.

"Can you see that bird up there in the alder bush?"

"I can hear it," Toni said, "and, on top of the poplar another one seems to answer."

The maid bent her head, listening. She wore a madonna-blue kerchief over her blonde hair. Toni picked up the handles of the barrow and wheeled it to the next flower-bed. Occasionally he stopped and listened too. Yes, there was a call, then on a different note, a gentle coo was heard in answer. He laid the pitchfork on the ground, took his note-paper from his hatband and began carefully to jot down the duet. It's very easy to compose, he thought, if the tunes are sung to you.

"D'you think you'll dance with me on Saturday?" the maid raised her voice.

He turned and looked at her and at her bright head, haloed by the sunshine. "Of course, I'll dance with you." He laughed. "If you're sure you'd like me to." Above his head more birds sang. He could distinguish seven voices now, a mocking, warning, bold wooing came from one tree, and gentle promises from another.

"But I'm only the maid," the young girl at the window said, and, as he looked at her again, it was as though not the sun about her were shining, but she herself, and her kerchief was bluer than ever. "I'm the handmaid of the Lord," he heard from far away a gentle voice.

He did not answer. He could not. Melodies were surging in his brain. A seven-voiced Ave Maria.

"Very busy?" he heard Herr Hecht's cold voice. Toni dropped his pencil and paper and grabbed the barrow handles, and before he could prevent it, Herr Hecht had bent down and picked up the note paper.

"That's right," he said. "Spend all your time on your music. When it comes to sensible work from which others could profit, then you do it in a rush. Oh dear," he sighed, "I did so hope we could make a go of it, after all. I have shown so much leniency. Far too much, in fact . . ."

"But I can still finish dunging to-day," Toni said repentantly.

Herr Hecht shook his head. "No, you can't. Not if you do a decent piece of work. And for to-morrow a thaw has been promised, and I won't let you run the barrow over the wet grass." He gave another deep sigh, then walked away, leaving Toni with dark premonitions and without his latest composition. Even the melody seemed to have floated away.

During the next few days, everything Toni tried to do seemed to turn out wrong, but Hecht was surprisingly patient. Perhaps his wife's illness and his worry over her had softened him. Toni fetched Thousand-Ducat tea from the woods and showed the maid how to prepare it to soothe the ailing woman's pain. Then, one day, as he stood in the garden, sawing some dead branches off a tree, he noticed a man and a young girl coming up the village road. The man looked vaguely familiar, and the girl, dressed in a gray velvet coat, was certainly conspicuous in that quiet place.

She waved and gesticulated in quick sharp movements which seemed meant for him. The eagerness which made her run ahead of the man, stirred vague memories in Toni's heart. Puzzled, he stared down the road. As she approached, he could hear the clicking of her high heels on the cobble stones, and see her ankles, so thin that it seemed as though they would snap with every one of her lively steps. "Toni! Toni!" she called.

Hecht came out of the house and looked curiously at the two visitors, his sallow face flushed. "What's that girl doing here?" he asked in a tone which was hard to analyze.

Toni shrugged. "She seems to know me."

The man had meanwhile caught up with the young girl and, in spite of the full beard he had grown and his white hair, there was no mistaking him. It was the former Judge of Ansfelden. "Herr Richter!" Toni dropped the saw and ran to meet him. "But this must be Barbara, then."

"Toni!" The young girl held out both her hands to him, and he shook them firmly, moved by her manifest delight in seeing him.

"Barbara!" He had always disliked her for being so obtrusive, and because he had never felt more shy and clumsy than when she used to protect him. But now he was glad to have her here as an old friend. Barbara was part of his childhood, part of Ansfelden. It was as good to see her as it would have been to lay eyes on his own sisters. In sudden appreciation he drew her close.

Her father coughed discreetly and Toni, flushing a crimson red, let go of the girl and embraced him too. The rough

contact of the flabby, bearded cheek after the soft touch of the girl's smooth skin, struck Toni as funny and he laughed a little foolishly with happiness and embarrassment.

Barbara surveyed him with a mixture of tenderness and despair. "You look frightful, Toni! Whatever have they done to you to make you look so subdued? I used to know you when you were whistling all the time." She turned to her father. "Doesn't he look like a sexton on Ash Wednesday?"

"Isn't she impertinent?" Herr Richter asked, in a tone which implied that the world would be lost without his daughter's quick tongue.

"She was always very witty," Toni said with a politeness which made Barbara wince.

"Tell him why we're here," she commanded her father and her elbow between Toni's ribs was just as oddly comforting as in their childhood. Richter struck an official attitude. "I was sent to inspect your work. There were complaints against you." He had hardly said it when he became absurdly embarrassed. "Please, don't hold this against me, Toni. I didn't come on my own."

"Oh, that's all right, Herr Richter. I believe I deserve to be inspected, when I think of all the things I didn't do and should have done."

"I can't imagine—" Richter said with a sudden surge of anger. "You've always been a good boy."

Barbara was looking straight ahead and Toni became aware that her eyes had taken on a measuring stare.

"Good morning," Herr Hecht's voice came from behind Toni.

Barbara did not drop her eyes as a girl should, but kept them fixed on Hecht. Toni had a sudden vision of Hecht's ailing wife, sitting bundled up in the big armchair in her drab, cold living-room. Then the vision faded and before him was Barbara, tall, cool, and with an enigmatic smile on her lips. "Ah," she said and her voice was rich and velvety, no longer the girlish treble he used to know. "So you're the big, big man before whom our Toni trembles."

"Well," Hecht said, never taking his eyes off Barbara, "you wouldn't be here to-day, if he had been working more and trembling less."

"You can surely believe me," Barbara said with a provocative smile, "when I say that this boy has more in his big clodhopper's head than most people you may know."

"All right, girl, that's enough out of you," her father reprimanded her. "Let me have a talk with Herr Hecht now."

"Just don't be too severe, you two," she called, recklessly blowing a kiss in their direction for them to share.

"Severe?" Hecht laughed derisively. "With a protégé of the Prelate?"

"Protégé!" Outraged, Barbara swung around.

Her father raised his hand to stem her rushing defense. "If you are referring to the fact that Prelate Arneth sent an old friend as Toni's investigator, I must tell you that your letter invited such action. You are a very critical man, Herr Hecht, and very clever. It may be unusually hard to live up to your requirements."

Barbara took Toni's arm with a sly smile. The conversa-

tion in front of them seemed to be proceeding to her satisfaction. Also he noticed that every time one of the villagers stuck his head curiously out from behind thick curtains, Barbara walked a little straighter, squeezed his arm and flashed him a smile of understanding. She was a wonderful girl!

The inspection did not last long; a short visit in Toni's classroom and an even shorter time spent in listening to him play on the organ. Before Herr Richter left, he walked through Hecht's garden with Toni. "I've been transferred to St. Florian," he told the boy, "and should you be summoned, I'll certainly speak in your favor. Don't worry too much. You'll be all right. Certainly you have gained one thing—expression in your music. Your playing is fervent and sincere."

"Herr Hecht doesn't seem to think so," Toni said dejectedly. "He says I lack 'form'."

"I shouldn't say this, I suppose," Herr Richter grumbled, "but I received the impression that 'form' is all *he* possesses." Then he swiftly changed the subject. "Show me the hothouse," he requested. "I've heard that at least with the flowers you've done a good job."

The padlock of the hothouse door was open, but the door seemed to be stuck. Toni walked around the low building to climb in through the window. Just as he turned the corner, he received so horrifying a shock that he dropped the iron lock upon the flagstones.

Hecht, with a brutal grip, had gathered Barbara into his arms and was kissing her. Startled by the noise Toni had

made, he straightened up and Barbara, pushing back her thick black curls with her characteristic sharp, jerky movements, had a serene expression on her face.

A little later they said good-bye and Barbara, without any signs of self-consciousness, leaned close to Toni and whispered: "You're going back to St. Florian, Toni. Isn't it marvellous?"

"Yes, Barbara," he said, confused.

"I knew you'd be pleased."

Suddenly he laughed with joy. "It's like going home!" He gazed unseeingly at her, his eyes on the white façade of the monastery, his ears hearing the wonderful tones of the Sunday organ.

Angrily Barbara stamped the floor with her high heels. "There you go again with that glassy stare I hate so. Sometimes I wonder whether you are a genius or an idiot!"

"What's that?" Toni asked, struggling back to the present, her last words still echoing in his ears. "Why, you know I've never been very bright."

At that moment Hecht and Richter walked closely by, and the sarcastic smile on the former's thin lips could only mean that he had heard what Toni had said and was in full agreement.

"Don't worry about what *he* thinks," Barbara whispered, motioning toward Hecht with her head. "He doesn't understand genius. He only understands brainwork. And who cares for brainwork?"

As Toni looked at her flushed, eager face, he remembered how, as a child, he had often thought that she painted her

cheeks with red ink, and perhaps she had. Who could know with Barbara! But she certainly took a friendly interest in him. "You're nice, Barbara," he said. "Everything you say sounds so natural, it's convincing, even if it's untrue."

"But it isn't untrue," she said, now quite serious. "Genius! Why, I can't define it exactly, but I feel it has everything in it—warmth and flavor. It's something big and complex. Oh, heaven! How could I explain a rose? Or a bird, or a thunderstorm? But brainwork I could take to pieces until nothing remained!"

A week later, Toni was summoned to St. Florian. In one way he was sorry, ashamed that this had happened. In another way he was glad. When the villagers learned that he had been accused of negligence to duty and would probably have to leave the village soon, they mocked him quite openly. "Look, over there goes our crazy assistant teacher. What a gnat-catcher!" they would call. The children caught on quickly and soon they too giggled behind his back or almost choked on their suppressed laughter.

He had failed them. There was no doubt. He had not performed his duties adequately and therefore had lost their respect. It would be better for him to go and leave this place to someone better equipped to fill it. He felt quite lost here now anyway. There were the Spats, of course, who seemed quite fond of him, but with Franz gone there seemed to be no good reason for Toni to continue to take advantage of their hospitality.

He left Windhaag, after serving the priest at the six o'clock mass. This was a good time to go, with the farmers already

at work and the children not quite ready for school. He had said good-bye to everyone the day before, and Herr Hecht had given him two folded papers. "Just in case you're being transferred to an easier job," he had said, "I'll give you two certificates the priest and I have drawn up. It will save you time, if you should need them. If you are ordered to remain here, you may just tear them up." He had smiled in almost kindly fashion.

As Toni waited for the horsecar, there were only the roosters abroad, crowing and flapping their wings as though waving good-bye, and the cows were sending long drawn-out calls from their stables. But then the morning sun shot out its beams and at the same time the birds began to sing. I'll always remember this, Toni thought. It's rather a happy ending, after all.

In the car he took the two letters out of the piece of white paper in which he had wrapped them and read what Herr Hecht and the priest had to say about him. What d'you know? 'Very eager in the teaching field . . . A devout sacristan.' Except once when I put the vestment on back to front, Toni thought and flushed beneath his tan. Well, anyway, his superiors must not have been too dissatisfied when they said such nice things about him. He loosened his collar with his index finger and, leaning back comfortably on the wooden bench, he slowly relaxed.

With every stop the land became more familiar and more beautiful. The wide friendly valleys had great charm, even covered with snow. Towering over them, proud in the power of their rocky summits, the mountains seemed to converge with the clouds. He half-closed his eyes and listened to the

different noises around him: the dull thumping of the horses' hoofs on wet snow, the clacking of iron wheels over cobble stones, the clinking of a bridle as a horse tossed its head. Immediately these noises became transmuted into the far-off sounds that come to you through the spheres if you listen very attentively. Music is heard faintly, coming across the distance, beating in little waves against the ear-drum, then increasing in tone and tempo, growing fierce and loud, making it hard for you to stay quiet in your seat. Then something happens—you are asked for your ticket or someone wants to know the time and the melodies fade away as fast as they have come.

Walking through the hamlet of Saint Florian, Toni felt more and more sure of himself. It was cold here too, in spite of the sun shining in a pale sky, but inside he was warm. When, on top of the hill, the monastery appeared, unconsciously he fell into a running step and laughed to himself. Like the cows, he mused, when they approach the stable in which they belong. Stable! He smiled, looking up at the beautiful structure—a little town in itself. How much he loved it! Once a Child had been humbly born in a stable and now all over the world people in reverence built Him the most grandiose palaces. Strong and beautiful, friendly and sublime, alluring and aloof, man-made copies of a higher world.

* * *

Prelate Arneth sat at his desk, his elbows propped up, his heavy peasant's face resting on his fists. "Come on, sit down, boy," he called in his booming bass. "I'm glad your head is high. I was rather worried for fear you might have lost your

stamina." He swept aside the two certificates which Toni, in spite of his newly-won courage, held in front of himself like a shield. "Now your side of the story," he said, and the expression of trust in his eyes became more pronounced.

Toni spoke more coherently than he had ever thought himself capable of doing, and, when he had finished, the Prelate rose and laid his hand on Toni's shoulder. "Maybe Hecht feared for his job," he said. "A man has got to live, you know."

"But how could I have been a danger to him?" Toni asked, startled. "He was in full charge, while all I could do was show the children how much I cared for them."

"Yes, but you see, some people can show their love and interest and others can't."

Toni tried to imagine how horrible it must be to live with a heart filled to the brim with love and not be able to give any of it away, and always to feel that one must burst with the pressure from inside. "But then it was all my fault!" he said, fascinated by his own change of view. "I should have known! If he had been really mean, he might have spoiled our Rocka Roas. I shouldn't have been so rash in my judgment."

"Now stop worrying," the Prelate said, his strong features melting in a kindly smile. "Hecht was a little grasping. He ought to have paid you extra for the work on his farm. By the way, did you get something at those Rocka Roas?"

"Yes, sometimes." Toni blushed. "At weddings and such, I was asked to put up my hat and they tossed their coins in."

"Did you mind?"

"A little. They were so poor . . . most of them. But Franz

said that it was all right for me to accept the money."

For a while the Prelate said nothing and his face was bright with the winter sun on it.

"I hope I haven't given you a wrong impression of Herr Hecht," Toni said worriedly. "I know he's having quite a hard time with the poor land and the low salary."

"Not every piece of land is fertile," the Prelate said. "If the soil lacks the ingredients which make up life—the warmth and energy of the sun and the blessings of rain—it won't bring forth a good crop."

As the priest spoke, Toni saw before his eyes the wide, lonely expanse, the smoke-gray sky, reflected in the swampy, disintegrating meadows, the big, ghost-like buzzards, flapping their wings, screeching the desolate call of loneliness. He felt strongly the urge to compose, to set down line after line, to reproduce the envy of the barren land, its longing for something always beyond its grasp. He felt full of energy, full of creative power. As the elusive melodies became clearer, the vision of Hecht's face, blurred in gray fog, became distinct. The sharp, clever, frustrated face now bore the expression of an immense delight. With or without the blessings of heaven—it was as the difference between life and death.

"Do you want me to go back?" he asked the Prelate.

But Arneth shook his head. "No, Toni, I don't think so. As an experience, Windhaag was all right. But, you must look forward, not back. You still have a lot to learn. Perhaps you aren't meant yet to distribute, but to collect—to gather your riches."

"You aren't angry?"

"I'm a little angry because you didn't tell me, three years ago, that it was music your heart was after. I asked you what you wanted to be, didn't I?"

"I answered you in all honesty," Toni said, his eyes meeting the Prelate's. "It's true I answered with my head, not with my heart, but I meant what I said then. There was my mother, you see, and the smaller children."

"Yes, I see." The Prelate stroked his strong chin. "But I don't think you should try to draw such a sharp distinction between the two careers."

"But if I don't, I'll fail again."

"I don't think so. I don't think you failed even in Windhaag. You were able to strike a spark in the hearts of the people, and it appears that you started one able young man on his career. That's a great deal. But even if you hadn't done any of these things, as long as you tried your best, the good Lord wouldn't blame you for your failures."

Toni sat upright in extreme tension, his cheeks burning. "I'm in constant doubt," he said. "How can I allow myself to indulge in music when it comes to me so easily? What merit is there in writing down a melody that was played to you in your dreams?"

The priest smiled. "The Gospel says: 'For the sons of the world are more clever in their own sphere than are the sons of the light.'—If God sends you a melody in your sleep, then remember that 'that which you hear in your ear you should preach from the housetops'."

As understanding slowly dawned upon him, drops of sweat broke through the weather-beaten skin of Toni's forehead, and the surge of acceptance mounted in him. "It's

true," he marvelled. "Music might have a good influence. It has already helped at times. I realize that now." I must look upon it as a means, just a means, he thought to himself. Of course, music coming from God, must lead back to God. Why didn't I think of it in that way before?

"What would you say if I sent you off to a village half the size of Windhaag, but within two hours' walking distance of here? I don't think the teacher there has an extra room for his helper, but he might put you up on a couch in the schoolroom. But there's a spinet there, too—a fine instrument, I remember, and there wouldn't be anyone you could disturb at night with your playing."

"I would think of it as a splendid advancement," Toni said, his heart pounding. Two hours from Saint Florian and its organ!

"Here, look at this map." The father took a map from the drawer of his desk. "Here's the place—Kronsdorf—about an hour and a half from Enns, where you could take courses in harmony and composition, and only two hours from Steyr." He opened the drawer once more and took out a picture. "This is the parish church at Steyr," he said. His big hand lay beside Toni's on top of the desk, big, strong, peasant's hands both, contrasting strangely with the slim, Gothic columns that enclosed the mystically beautiful church nave in the print before them.

"I've never seen anything so beautiful," Toni said, overawed by the delicacy of an architecture so different from the round, heavy, comfortable baroque he knew. What kind of masses shall I play there? he wondered.

"The teacher and his wife are old people, with no chil-

dren of their own," the Prelate returned to the subject, Kronsdorf. "I think they'll pamper you a little, if you can stand that," he said in a mocking voice. "And can that woman cook! Pancakes, tiny and golden, like our ducates. Dumplings, filled with apricots and melting in your mouth. Ducks," he gave a little whistle of appreciation, "why, you just try them." He slapped Toni heartily on the back. Then, serious again, "But I do think you must take a Bible along, and I'll put in a few book-marks for you, too, because there are a few things you ought to remember. For instance: 'You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt lose its flavor, wherewith shall it be salted?' " And knowing that Toni did not belong to those bright ones for whom a mere suggestion would do, he added by way of explanation: "So let music be the flavor of your teaching, my dear boy."

When Toni walked down into the village to spend a few hours with Herr Bogner, the teacher whose house had been his shelter during the years he had served as a choir-boy, he felt like a plant that had been returned to its familiar soil, and, as the rich sap, mounting through its roots, refills the depleted tissues, so he felt all his dormant powers return. The spirit that emanated from the monastery was once more reaching the very core of his being. Even as he walked, he opened the Bible at one of the indicated pages and read: Do you not know that the runners in the race course all run, but only one takes the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.

Why not? he mused and, galloping down the steep road, he whistled one of the gay tunes he had composed in Windhaag for the Rocka Roas.

I.

4.

Herr Goller, the organ tuner, came early in the morning to St. Florian on that important day in 1855.

"Why, Herr Bruckner," he cried. "I picked this day because I was sure you'd be in Linz to compete for the position of cathedral organist, and I wouldn't be in your way here."

"Why should I go to Linz?" Toni, seated on the organ bench, said in an irritated voice. "I have everything I could ever ask for. I'm a happy man."

"For a happy man your face is a little sour."

"Now you say that too." Toni's fingers struck a minor chord. "My mother told me that on my last visit to Ebelsberg, and, only the other day, Prelate Mayr stopped me in the corridor and asked me why I was in such a bad mood. I don't know what's the matter with me."

"Perhaps you are lonely."

"I have the children," Bruckner said.

"And they adore you." Goller's tone became warm. "The older Bogner girl told me only last week that if she had her way she wouldn't do a thing but listen to your music."

"She said that? She did really?" Toni hoped Goller wouldn't see how scarlet his face had become.

"The children are all right," Goller said, "but then again they aren't enough. Once they leave school and might be good, grown-up company," he snapped his fingers, "that's the last you see of them."

"I had brought a good quartet together," Toni led the conversation into safer channels, "but the three other players were transferred, and if that weren't enough, my best friend had to fall in love with my sister on her last visit here, marry her and move to Ebelsberg."

"That's a shame," Goller said, "and I can see that you miss them all. Then too, Prelate Arneth's death has hit you quite hard, I suppose. But none of this is sufficient excuse for not making new friends, you know."

Toni went on developing his soft minor chords. He was embarrassed because the temptation to pour out his soul was so alluring, because he wanted so much to tell this friendly man his troubles, yet a certain modesty held him back.

"Will you stop playing now and let me do my work?" Goller asked and obediently Toni climbed off the organ bench and walked over to the choir window. It was a fine day outside. The village looked as bright and friendly as ever, with its whitewashed houses and glittering roofs. "Isn't it strange," he murmured, "that when a man has everything in this world, he still doesn't feel altogether happy."

"Well," Goller said, "I see you are being honest with yourself."

There was a sudden shocked pause. "I don't know," Toni said then. "There are always two sides to a situation."

Goller shrugged. "I still think you need a complete change in another town."—"What an organ," he interrupted his sermon, staring at the thousands of metal pipes before him. "Only the organ of St. Stephen's Church in Vienna can measure up to it."

"Why do you think I ought to go away?" Toni asked, trying to remember the beautiful tones of the instrument before him, which, as long as he stayed, was his empire.

"It's strange," Goller said, "that I should have to tell you what you yourself know so well." He pushed his tools aside and sat comfortably down on the bench. "Here you are in St. Florian and you struggle and struggle, year after year, and you are always thinking you're going to work your way up."

Toni straightened up with a jerk. "But I've done that already. Haven't I? Wasn't I called from Kronsdorf, as soon as there was a teaching position available here, and didn't I get the post as organist at once when Herr Platt had been transferred?"

"Yes, that's all very true, but when you come right down to it, you're still Tonerl, the choir-boy. The good fathers have become used to you, to your meekness, your eagerness to please. It's 'Tonerl do this', and 'Tonerl do that'. That's to be expected."

His own doubts gave Toni a feeling of wretchedness. "But it isn't like that at all," he said, yet he knew in some way he could not explain, that Goller was right. They certainly didn't take advantage of him. If he was asked to compose for some special occasion, he considered it an honor. Moreover, he owed so much to the good fathers that he would never be able to pay them back, even if he slaved all his life. What *was* the matter then?

"I know how these things are," Goller said. "They allow you time off from teaching—let's say from two to six—so

that you can make up a melody. And it must be a good melody. In fact it must be very good, and it must be for a purpose and must fit limping verses a student has written. You have a wonderful melody in your head but must put it aside because it isn't suitable for these rhymes." He took out paper and tobacco and began making a cigarette. "You fight and you fight until there's nothing left but an insistent humming or singing," he went on, "and you shake that off too like a horse shakes off the gnats that buzz around his head."

Toni's body grew cold as he thought of the countless times when, greatly flattered by the request, he had started out to compose and then, moving desperately back and forth on the organ bench, his eyes on the watch, he had not been able to set down a single note of the desired theme, because his head was buzzing with a whole symphony of melodies. "If you are gifted you should be able to compose anything and at all times," he said, setting his jaw. He wouldn't allow this man to talk him into an unbearable position.

"Then you rush out of the house," Goller went on in a quiet steady voice, resolute and unyielding as a surgeon dealing with a malignant growth. "You run through the streets, singing and whistling, trying to rid yourself of the strong music, but you can't."

"Yes, that's true, and it's not the right way for me either to make friends," Toni said and, in spite of himself, a long-drawn sigh escaped him, for he was well aware that gossip around the village had long ago classed him among the insane.

"Ah, that's a different thing altogether," Goller said,

chuckling. "You've got to be able to handle certain situations, you see. As long as they think you're dwelling in another sphere, listening to melodies none of them hears, they'll take you for a fool, but once you tell them that you are just making practical use of the time you spend walking between your jobs by mentally arranging the choruses you'll conduct on Sunday, they'll respect your zeal and economy of time and purpose."

"I don't have to lie in order to impress them," Toni said in an injured tone. "Here, you can see for yourself." He took a much worn wallet out of his pocket and began pulling out papers. "Here!" He walked over to Goller and handed them to him.

Goller unfolded first the certificate Toni had received upon the completion of a two-year course in Linz, in preparation for secondary school teaching. "Hm," he grunted, "this, I suppose, took a lot of time away from your composing."

Toni flared up, but then thought better of it and kept quiet.

The other paper made Goller frown. Written by the village pastor and acknowledged by the decanate inspector, it was nothing less than a certificate of good conduct, which stressed Bruckner's absolute integrity and his whole-hearted interest in both his teaching and his music. "How terribly torn a man must be," Goller stated, "who goes to such an extent to defend himself."

"There are people who are jealous of me," Toni said, "and who would like to have my position. Hecht, for in-

stance, had been sure that Windhaag was a stepping-stone for St. Florian, yet the Fathers have given me preference."

"But Hecht hasn't done so badly for himself. You know, don't you, that he is one of the leading newspapermen in Vienna."

"But still he had thought my post a desirable one."

Goller smiled wanly. "Very desirable, indeed. I hear you composed the Missa Solemnis for Prelate Mayr's investiture, but you weren't invited to the dinner party that followed that magnificent ceremony."

"Prelate Mayr couldn't invite me," Toni said urgently. "There are certain rules of etiquette he can't violate. He explained it all to me." All Toni's loyalty for St. Florian and its spiritual leaders was up in arms. "Isn't it too bad that even in Linz people have nothing better to do but gossip about our most private affairs in the monastery here!" he cried.

"Your organ-playing is no longer a private affair concerning St. Florian alone," Goller said. "You don't seem to realize that you are considered the best organist in Austria."

Toni remained completely still, numbed by the weight of Goller's statement. If that were true, if he, the simple, much laughed at, Toni Bruckner, were that good—and Goller knew, if anyone did, of the professionals—then the Linz organ contest was a challenge. In that case, he ought to compete.

With unexpected suddenness he swung around to the organ works where pipes stood in orderly rows. Why, the D alone weighs 490 pounds, he thought foolishly, as though on

the size and weight of this one pipe his decision depended. What an overwhelming change it would be to leave St. Florian, this quiet, secure haven, where you could safely hide from the world and play to the glory of God and the satisfaction of man. I'd be lost, he reflected, if I were on my own, but at the same time something inside him rejoiced at the thought that the grinding business of meeting the dreary everyday demands would be over—perhaps forever.

"I'd like to play the organ for the Bishop every day," Toni said, "but I can't seem to think that I would be good enough."

"You have to decide only whether you'll go to Linz or not. The judges will decide who is good enough for the job."

"I don't know what to do." Toni bit his lips. "If the Prelate were here so that I could ask him . . ."

Goller looked at his watch. "Perhaps you'd like to wait until the competition is over. He might be back by then!"

"Don't torture me, please," Toni said in a low urgent tone. "All my life I have been accustomed to following orders. I can't change my habits in such a hurry. I must have someone's permission." He walked nervously up and down the choir loft.

Goller's shrewd face softened. "But you can't be sure that you're going to win. Why disturb the Prelate now?"

"You don't know it, but once I promised him never to do anything without consulting him."

"Why then don't you ask your music teacher or some other authority, and then go to Linz?"

Toni's long fingers drummed a march on the window sill.

"I couldn't do that to the Prelate, after all he has done for me. I couldn't," he said in a loud voice. "Besides how would I ever get to Linz in time?"

"Stand on the corner and whistle to the next wagon that goes by. But better make it a popular tune." Goller laughed.

"I have been cradled in this monastery like a child in his mother's arms." Bruckner interrupted his speech, startled by the noise of approaching footsteps on the stair. He knew that springy gait so well that no matter how many years might go by, he would always recognize it.

"That's Barbara," he said, and his voice shook a little. Strange, he thought, how she is always around when I am in need. Now how does she know that I'm in trouble? "I suppose the Holy Ghost must have told her," he said uncertainly to Goller.

"Of course," Goller remarked with a cynical smile.

"Grüss Gott," Barbara said, leaping over the last step. "I can't tell you how angry I am!" With these words she started a conversation after a separation of years. "I came all the way from Vienna to see the Prelate and now he isn't here." The little red cherries on her hat rattled with the quick jerky movements of her small fine head.

"Why did you come to see the Prelate?" Bruckner, already divining that she had made the trip for his sake, felt his heart fluttering like an imprisoned bird.

"Why, because of you, of course," she said, surprised at his unsuspecting attitude. Then she turned to Goller. "That Toni! Such a poor devil!" she said, "with no mind of his own. He can't do this and he oughtn't to do that, and it

might not be right if he did anything at all but obey orders."

"It's too bad that the Prelate isn't here. You might have put a good word in for Herr Bruckner," Goller said.

"What made you think you could sway the Prelate?" Toni asked, half pleased, half shocked.

"Oh, I have one or two good tricks in mind." She threw her head back and laughed, showing all her sharp white teeth. " 'It's for Toni's own good,' I would tell the Prelate, 'he'll grow up faster'." She came closer, her slim fingers moving agitatedly before Toni's face. "And if the Prelate said, 'But I need him here at the monastery,' I'd answer, 'Toni belongs to the world, Your Excellency.' "

"You don't understand, Barbara," Toni interrupted her. "It's not a question of how many people my playing inspires—if it inspires anyone at all—but how deeply it affects a man, even if it's only one. Therefore I'm here in St. Florian which is just as good a place as a bigger town."

"Toni's just a coward, Herr Goller, isn't he? Always thinking of the risks he's taking," Barbara interrupted Toni's words, and Goller seconded her.

"Of course there's a big difference between living in a village and in a town," said Goller slowly. "In St. Florian people are simple and gay and Herr Bruckner's duties are a pleasure. In the city they are hastening and scrambling hither and thither, and he would have to adjust himself to their tempo."

"Besides, it's not only a matter of playing," Barbara went on, before Toni could even open his mouth. "It's a matter of composing. What Toni can create on paper will live on

and on. Wouldn't it?" she turned to Goller, then continued her pleading. "Why, he'd be like a prophet, leading future generations along the way to God." She stopped short as though startled by the force of her own words, and clapped both her hands over her mouth.

Toni shook his head in wonder. Now here was Barbara, although no longer a girl, but a fine-looking young woman in her early thirties, standing up for him once more. In the dim church light her face seemed almost luminous. Her small elliptical mouth was crimson, her figure in its soft fur coat seemed as slim and alive as ever. "I'll wait for you," she had said that day in the classroom, when a howling crowd of children had hoped to make a fool of him. Years later, she had walked through an unfriendly village with him, holding his arm, her little head high. He had never done anything for her at all. He looked down at his shabby suit, at his shoes, cracked and none too clean. I wonder why she cares, he thought.

"Look at him," Barbara cried. "He has that glassy stare again, almost like someone in a daze. We could shoot ourselves and with melodies streaming out of his ears, he wouldn't even hear the noise of the shot."

"But if I went to Linz and lost the contest and the post it offers, and the Prelate took this job away from me too as punishment, wherever would I go?"

"Oh, Toni, you of little faith!" Barbara cried, stamping her high heels.

"You don't understand, Barbara. Once I applied for a position in Olmütz and the Prelate was so very angry that

he made me swear never again to do anything without consulting him."

"Olmütz!" Barbara wrung her hands in mock anguish. "Have you ever heard of a Czech being decent to a German? Would you want the Prelate to agree to your going away for the sake of stepping down instead of climbing up? You crazy fool, will you please go now and put on a new suit and brush your shoes until they gleam? There isn't a minute to lose!"

"No," Toni said firmly. "You are both trying to tempt me. My duty lies right here in St. Florian. My loyalty belongs to the Prelate."

"Let me tell you something, Toni," Barbara said, and her expression was suspiciously serene. "You'll go to Linz and enter the competition in order to bring honor to St. Florian. Should you win and should the Prelate disapprove of your going, you could resign. Isn't that clear?"

"Resign? that's the answer, Barbara," he shouted. "Really, you're a bright person. Small wonder you made your way so easily in Vienna." He gripped her hand so firmly that she winced. "Thanks for coming here, Barbara. I'm so grateful, and I'll bring you back something nice from Linz."

"Don't waste your money. I would have come here anyway to see my father. This time is as good as any other."

Toni waved to Goller and ran down the stairs. "Easily," he heard Barbara say, "I've made my way easily!" And never before had he heard her voice so bitter. In a low tone she said something else to Goller, something that nagged at Toni

later when he was making his hurried preparations for departure. 'The Prelate must make the sacrifice. He wouldn't want to be shamed by a woman like me.' As though she had made some kind of sacrifice. As though it were up to her to hold him or let him go. Toni was quite upset by her remark until a broken shoelace and a loose button diverted his attention.

Before leaving, he stopped in front of the picture of St. Paul kneeling before our Lord. 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me do?' St. Paul had asked and the Lord had answered him, 'Go to the big city.' "Please, dear God, give me a sign too," Toni whispered and, bracing himself, resolutely, he added, "If You want me to stay in Linz, I'll do so, even if the Prelate doesn't like it."

Walking down toward the highway, he racked his brain for a popular tune to whistle at the corner, as Goller had suggested. Since he had been given a day off to compose a melody, the least he could do under the circumstances was to carry out this assignment. He recited the verses he was to set to music and wished they were in good Latin instead of bad German. Softly he began to hum. The tune wasn't bad, but it wasn't his either, a bit of Schubert, a bit of Haydn. Oh, what's the use, he sighed, and wondered how they could still believe in a fool like himself.

When he heard the clatter of hoofs and the sound of approaching wheels, he ran at full speed down the road to catch the approaching vehicle on the highway. As he reached the corner, he could see a hay wagon on high wheels. He waved his big black hat to the farmer who, clad in gay

Alpine costume, sat on the high driver's seat. "Are you going to Linz?" Toni asked.

"If I weren't, I'd be driving in the opposite direction." The man laughed. "Hop in."

Toni swung his long legs over the wooden rail, then sat down on the straw in the bottom of the wagon. Now the decision had been made. There could be no backing out. He thought of all the fine gentlemen who would be assembled for the competition and it made him feel bad; he thought of Prelate Mayr, his superior, and he felt worse. With the clacking of the horses' hoofs on stone mingled a rhythmical song: It'll turn out badly! It'll turn out badly!

It'll turn out badly. If you said it often enough, it became rather funny. Toni watched the passing view. The river Enns flowed sparkling along, widening where small tributaries joined it, rushing down wildly over steep slopes, forming quiet little lakes in which white driftwood floated. His mood changed and he began to thrill to this escapade.

"What're you going to Linz for?" the driver shouted over his massive shoulder. "Business?" And, after a quick side-glance at Toni he grinned.

"I'm just visiting," Toni said discreetly.

"Then you shouldn't sit back there, you'll get all dirty." The farmer pulled on the reins so that the horses stopped with a jerk.

Toni shook off the straw stalks that stuck to him and took his place on the high seat beside the friendly man.

"Is there anything interesting going on in Linz?" Toni asked carefully, and obligingly the driver told him that a new

beer-house was going to open that day with free food and drinks to celebrate the occasion.

"I thought there was some kind of a competition in the cathedral," Toni groped for information.

"Oh yes, to be sure," his new friend answered. "I wish I could go there myself, but it's not open to the public. Everyone says a fellow by the name of Bruckner is going to win."

"Do they really say that?" Toni asked. His heart seemed to stop beating and his ears were filled with the sound of organ music.

"Why, d'you know him by any chance?"

When Bruckner shyly confessed who he was, the man laughed out loud. "I thought maybe you were he. You look exactly like people say Bruckner looks."

"How do they say I look?"

"Oh, like a peasant, if you don't mind, except when he hears melodies, then he kind of turns his eyes inward and suddenly looks like a creature from another world."

"That's nice," Toni said blushing. "I think that's a real compliment." But the next minute he had to grab the iron arm of the driver's bench. His neighbor, realizing how late it was, flicked the whip and the horses pulled away with a jerk that almost flung Toni off the cart. "Hold it," he gasped, the wind of their own passing speed taking his breath away. The cart rattled along, bouncing over the cobble stones. Chickens fled, pigeons fluttered up and settled disapprovingly upon the roofs, worried mothers caught their children's hands and dragged them to safety.

"Look," the driver shouted proudly. "Even the pigs uncurl their tails when I drive by."

Toni could not find words of admiration. He sat rigid, his heart leaping.

In no time at all the hilly surroundings of Linz appeared before them. Friendly people waved as the cart flew by. Trees, enclosed in a sheath of ice, were sparkling and beautiful beneath the blue sky. The winter sun shone warmly upon Toni's back. Now, at last, Toni felt free of the pressure of guilt. If we get safely to town everything will be all right, he thought, and he clung to the bench, praying silently.

His hair was windblown, his mouth dry and his hands shaky. His muscles ached from the effort of staying on the cart, but all this was forgotten. As soon as the first houses appeared, the town drew him with terrific power. He himself would have urged the horses on, if the driver had not done so. St. Florian lay far behind him. The need for friends, the urge to compose, were back there too. The school, the children—even, were forgotten. Forward, forward, his blood sang!

When the cart stopped on the main plaza, the driver, good-naturedly removed a loose button from Toni's coat with his pocket knife. "Better off than dangling," he remarked. "And you might brush off your shoes."

Toni looked down and to his horror became aware that he had forgotten to change into the pair of boots he had so thoroughly cleaned. He reached for his big blue handkerchief, but the driver didn't let him use it. "Here take mine," he said, "you'll need yours, once you start sweating."

A minute later Toni was alone. He couldn't back down now, not in sight of the immense granite steeples, not with the prospect of the dim, sacred church interior.

The big wrought-iron gate was open and he walked through, his heart in his throat. He could hear the organ in the choir-loft. Someone was trying to develop a fugue. Trying so desperately, the poor fool! Interested in the false modulations, Toni climbed up the stairs leading to the organ. At the last step he stopped short. On a bench near the bellows sat the Bishop. Though dressed in a simple cassock, he was easily recognizable, a mighty man. Beside him sat Leitner, one of Toni's former teachers, and two other men who were scribbling in their notebooks.

Toni walked toward the rail and knelt down. With his eyes fixed on the altar, he began to pray. He greatly needed to pray. Here, in the quietness of the church, he made his confession to God and to himself: he wanted to win the contest, he wanted the new job at Linz, desperately—passionately. It was wrong perhaps to feel the way he did. Passion was sinful, and music now had become a passion with him. He looked at the statue of St. Augustine and heavy chords seemed to resound from the massive stone figure. He touched the cold marble top of the railing, and soft smooth runs pearled along its motley surface. He smelled the vague mixture of incense and flowers and a sad melody in B flat floated through the nave, accompanied by a solemn basso. His senses were poisoned, there was no question about it.

Toni started as a hand fell on his shoulder. He looked up right into Franz Spat's face. He had never expected Franz at an organ competition, and his surprise equalled his delight. He would have liked to hug his old friend and hold him close, but the holiness of the church checked his joy,

and only his hearty handshake and the tender expression of his eyes could tell the other man how very, very pleased he was to see him.

Kneeling down beside Toni, Franz whispered: "You'll be the death of us all," and he smiled as though it meant nothing to him to be defeated by Toni.

"Oh, but I'm not going to play," Toni said quickly. Now, at last, God had given him a sign. He could not compete for a position a friend had hoped for, perhaps for a long time.

Franz shook his head. "We'll enter the contest on equal terms. It means a great deal to me too. I'm wondering whether I should change from the violin to the organ for good."

He stopped whispering and glanced quickly in the direction of the jury, but seeing their attention upon the first contestant, he went on. "I've been studying the organ, and playing very seriously for the last ten years. Why don't you give me a chance to meet a really worthy rival, you self-centered old musician?"

"I'm not a worthy rival, as you call me," Toni said sadly. "I wouldn't deserve to win. I would play for the love of music. You, Franz, will play for the love of God."

There was no opportunity for Franz to reply. It was his turn and as he walked toward the organ, Toni began to pray fervently for his success. But the devil seemed to have the best of it because, although Toni's lips murmured 'Franz', his heart cried out his own name.

As he knelt, his palms and forehead moist from the heat of his spiritual struggle, his inner conflict in the semi-dark-

ness, the nearness of God and the monotonous sound of an organ fugue must have made him drift off into a world of dreams, for the next thing he knew, he was struggling back to reality, trying to obey a voice that was calling him—Herr Leitner's voice. His former teacher was standing by the rail, leaning over Toni.

"Toni, you must do it. You must play for the glory of God!"

Only then did Toni rise like a sleep-walker. He went to the organ bench, guided by Leitner's firm grip. But when Toni held the note paper with the fugue theme in his hands, he became wide awake and almost laughed aloud. They must have conceived it in many a sleepless night. He had never seen anything quite so difficult and intricate. He waited while his mind struggled to remember all the minute rules taught him by his severe teacher Sechter, and he planned the structure of his fugue accordingly. At last he half-closed his eyes, allowing the waves of emotion within him to surge freely and to mingle in one stream flowing through the channels of his motifs.

"Is it too difficult?" The Bishop had approached the organ, and was looking at Toni with no little concern.

"Oh, no," Toni said joyously. He wanted so much to play for the Bishop that he could not start playing fast enough. To him Bishop Rudigier symbolized "den deutschen Michel"—the German idol whose feet were planted on the soil of his homeland and whose head was in the clouds. He was just the man to link heaven and earth. Serene personality radiated from his cheerful face, his unbending character was

manifested in his muscular build, in the broad white forehead and the big angular jaw.

With the picture of the Bishop before his eyes, Toni could play easily. His feet glided on the pedal board to the right and to the left, almost skipping, as though propelled by a springy power all their own. This was pure bliss. Toni played and played. He wished he could play a hole through the church ceiling so that the organ notes might mount higher and higher, making a breach in the sky.

When he had finished his fugue, Toni sat quietly, still under the spell of the music. The four judges were holding their heads close together and speaking in subdued voices. Franz slid onto the bench alongside Toni. "When men are speaking with the tongues of apostles, they are filled with the spirit," he said, his lips smiling, his eyes serious, "and they profess the secrets in the language of the spirit."

"That sounds good," Toni said uncertainly. "But I don't quite get it."

"Goethe *is* good," Franz answered, "but I don't always get him myself." He put an arm around Toni, "Well, old boy, my congratulations. You've won this competition, of course, and I'm glad for your sake. I was not really very interested, and for you it means your life work. I must be off now, but I'll be seeing you."

"Please, don't go yet," Toni said urgently. "Wait for the jury's decision." But Franz was gone.

Alone now on the organ bench, Toni looked at the altar, while Franz's steps made a soft clatter on the stone floor. He remained seated, without looking at Franz's receding back,

expecting to hear the wooden echo of the steps leading down to the church nave. When there was no sound, he glanced around and saw that his friend was standing still, looking not at him but at the organ, the rows of gleaming pipes, all the things in which he disclaimed any interest. Hot tears mounted into Toni's eyes. "You liar," he whispered. "You old liar."

When his vision had cleared, Franz was almost out of sight. His steps grew fainter along the aisles. Then there was the sound of a door opening, and the iron ring as it banged shut. Franz was out and Toni was in. But was he? Sudden fear caused his heart to skip a beat. Perhaps he too was not good enough for the job. Perhaps another contest would be held. In that case, if Prelate Mayr offered his place at St. Florian to someone else, while he was absent, where could he turn?

"I was never very good at anything," he said to himself. "My masses were too impressionistic, Hecht told me years ago, and I neglected the old Church style. I was too bold!"

"And why should you not be bold when you are playing for Our Lord?" the Bishop, who had approached unawares, said gently. "Has not Christ recommended to let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify Your Father Who is in heaven? Did He not say to His followers, 'go you also into my vineyard,' because He wanted them to use their talents to help others gain eternal life?"

"But I don't think I can reach others. In St. Florian I was as if on an island, far from the world. I have never played for all kinds of men—rather for a community of the

faithful." Toni was trying to give the Bishop a revealing picture.

"Perhaps you have reached the world through them, or perhaps it's time for you to step out into the world. Don't you know that if the Holy Ghost casts only one spark of His light, only one glance of His wisdom over you, you become one of the chosen and must appear before your fellow-men to enlighten and warm them?"

Toni could not speak. The pressure of his emotions lamed his throat and held his lips in a spasm.

"It's God's business we are here to do, Herr Bruckner, not our own," the Bishop said in a humble voice. "I need you. I need your fortifying harmonies of faith. We are not living in an easy era. Society does not look upon the Church with favorable eyes. People have become cynical, irreligious. We must win them over. We can not be lax while our great enemy is at work."

"You say you need me? You, the great Bishop?" Toni stammered, slowly grasping the full extent of the Bishop's request. "But how can this be possible?"

The Bishop smiled. "Did not Saul listen to David's harp playing?" he asked. "You say I am a great man, but I have only human words to say to you, while you are speaking to me through the language of the spheres. Go ahead, Bruckner, let it resound that lonely voice of faith. If you don't reach those people who sneer at religion, I may, if your playing gives me the necessary inspiration."

"Your Excellency is perhaps over-estimating me," Toni said, trembling.

"Poor man. How little appreciation you must have received so far! How thorny your path must have been. But remember, Christ wore a crown of thorns before His Resurrection. Your art too was born of suffering and now your playing expresses the radiant certainty of the prophet. It's your kind of faith which St. Augustine placed above the knowledge that can be proved."

"Are city people really so bad?" Toni stared at the Bishop questioningly. In his mind's eye he saw Barbara, gay and warm, with her crimson mouth and her black curls.

"Not really bad," the Bishop said with warmth, "but superficial, frivolous, and full of an arid contempt of late for the farmer."

Toni said nothing. I love them all, he thought, feeling vaguely that if he went forward on the path he had started, a thorny path the Bishop had called it, he would always be lonely, living in a world apart.

"Don't be afraid," the Bishop said kindly. "Remember that the stone which the builders condemned became the corner stone, and be assured that those are blessed who long for only one thing—the response of God."

The abundance of deep, reverent emotion within him forced Toni to play. Softly and humbly, his fingers moved over the keyboard, expressing his deep contentment, his submissive acceptance. When finally he stopped, he heard the Bishop's voice. "You are the organist of this church from to-day on." And, with a smile, the holy man added, "If you should have any doubts about this, I shall make it an order."

Only then did Toni clasp the Bishop's hands, his face radiant with undying obedience and devotion.

When Leitner approached and congratulated Toni with words of pride and admiration, Toni pressed his hands over his eyes, so blinded for a moment was he with joy. All the long and earnest conflicts were over, as was the harrowing series of decisions made and unmade. He had just been appointed cathedral organist by his Excellency, the Bishop. Lovingly, Toni stroked the keys. Proudly he caressed the beautiful organ.

When he was alone in the street, he wondered to whom he could tell his delight. Remembering Barbara's interest in him, he stepped into a store for religious articles and bought her a thick prayer book with shining gilt edges. Clutching his gift to his shabby coat, he walked out into the winter sunshine. What big round eyes Barbara would make when she heard that his life had finally been led into the right path! Music! Now it would be music forever! She'll like the prayer book, he thought, humming a magnificat. Much later only he remembered that he had meant to buy a rosary too for Lois Bogner. She was so sweet!

PART TWO

Adagio Appassionato

Part Two

ADAGIO APPASSIONATO

Theme: And lead us not into temptation.

II.

1.

In the first year after his appointment as cathedral organist in Linz, Toni was too timid to live in the city, so the good Fathers in St. Florian allowed him to keep his old room in the convent. Daily he made the trip between St. Florian and Linz rather than face the new surroundings continually. Oddly enough, the strange uneasiness that took hold of him in the bustling town, remained with him in the country too and was not altogether disagreeable either. In April, the light sweet scent of cherry blossoms haunted him. It seemed to him that he was no longer Toni Bruckner, but a part of the springtime. He felt at times as though his soul had temporarily fled his body to mingle with the sky, the budding woods, the freshly green fields, the throbbing life of nature. This was a pagan attitude, he realized, but how

could he escape it? City and country alike were undermining his peace of mind.

What made matters worse was the fact that his music too was affected by the new change. Sounds of love, light, like the breath of flowers, shivered in his tenor voices; in his trebles was heard the amorous twittering of birds. However fast he ran, beneath his feet the song of the earth streamed along, and, when he stood still, the whole universe seemed to assail him with powerful melodies that made his brain reel.

He prayed with all his might, asking God to help him. To purge his mind, he forced it to dry, monotonous tasks, offering his services to the city clerk, who, for a part-time job, gave him legal papers to copy, several hours every day. But this penance was of little avail, since the music was so strong, and soon his brain became absorbed again by an abundance of bold, voluptuous harmonies. Finally he decided to put these aggressive tones on paper. Once written, however, they seemed even more dreadful. Oh, good Lord, if his teacher Sechter could see them, he would faint with horror. It must be the *foehn* that upsets me so, Bruckner thought, looking for some plausible explanation.

When he played, however, what he had written, he was shaken by the tenderness of the melodies. How longingly these two themes reached for each other, alternately intertwining and separating until they finally merged into rich, yet soft harmonies. Disconcerted, he rubbed his Roman nose. It could not be possible for something so beautiful to be offensive, yet he had to admit that these harmonies stirred his senses.

What shall I do? he asked. The conflict tore his heart. It was clear that he needed advice and help from someone who knew more about music than he knew himself, someone too who was a man of the world, but a Catholic at the same time, whose suggestion would also be in accordance with the laws of the Church. Suddenly, he remembered Kitzler, the orchestra conductor of the theatre. It was true, many people said that the theatre in itself was corrupt, but Toni had no reason to accept this opinion. If it were true, surely the good fathers in St. Florian would have warned him to stay away from the theatre. On the contrary, however, they had permitted plays, based on Biblical themes, of course, to be performed at the monastery.

Toni looked at the picture of Christ, wearing the crown of thorns. "Please, dear Jesus, tell me what to do," he begged. "Kitzler is a good man. He goes to church. I see him there, every Sunday. Please, dear Jesus, let me go now to Kitzler, and You be with me. This problem must be solved, and I don't think I can wait until to-morrow morning to ask my father confessor's permission."

Hurriedly, he tore up his composition lest anyone see it and wonder about the kind of music he was composing. At the door he stopped and looked back. "Jesus," he said, not to the picture but to the Lord, "don't be angry with me for asking You so many questions. I do it because I love You."

Herr Kitzler had just finished the evening rehearsal and was putting away his baton, when Toni made his appearance. "Herr Kitzler," he began and his big organist's hands trembled. "You are a Catholic and you conduct your life along strict Catholic principles. Isn't that so?"

"Certainly, Herr Bruckner," Kitzler said gravely. He cast a quick glance from Toni in his shabby black coat and short wide trousers to his departing musicians. But Toni pulled at his sleeve, trying to hold his attention like an impatient child.

"I need your advice," he said urgently, and came right to the point. "I must know whether it is right or wrong to compose music which has a strong appeal to the human senses, an entirely new and different music, or so it seems to me. You must tell me." He raised imploring hands.

"Please, don't look at me with such pleading eyes," Kitzler said. "I am honored and ashamed at the same time by your confidence in me who am so much younger and certainly not a musician of your calibre." He glared at a bassoon player who tore a dry, humorous chord from his instrument. "Come with me to the soloists' room," he said to Toni. "We have more privacy there."

Sitting across the table from Kitzler, Toni explained his troubles. "The conflict preys on my mind," he finished, "and prevents me from working. I cannot find peace until I have received guidance in the matter. That's why I have come at this late hour."

Seeing that Kitzler was smiling at his discomfort, Toni's heart gave a leap. At least the conductor was not put out by his request.

"I think that people like you, I mean people of genius, must put on paper everything they feel the urge to create," Kitzler said with emphasis.

"But aren't there any restrictions at all concerning forms?"

"I wouldn't say there are *no* restrictions," Kitzler said thoughtfully, "but what I do insist on is that there is greater freedom in the choice of form than you seem to think. As a matter of fact, I believe it is the job of all able composers to create more new forms—forms that will remain. Did not the minstrels of the Middle Ages use the three-part song which later appeared in the sonata, and which Haydn employed in the first movement of his symphony?" He sat down at an upright piano and began to play bits of music taken from sonatas and symphonies, illustrating how many a great master had contributed just one small stone to the building of a giant cathedral of music.

Although almost convinced of the truth of Kitzler's explanation, Toni still continued to argue. "There's not a word of these new harmonies in the theory books I have studied."

"Herr Bruckner, times have changed and are still changing." Kitzler took his place again at the table opposite Toni. "Unquestioned obedience to all human rules is out, just as Metternich's regimentation is over and done with. There was a revolution in '48, remember? Well, everything has been changed since then, even music." He smiled wryly. "Even you. But your mind would have broken out of the confining barracks, revolution or no revolution."

Bruckner frowned. "But times haven't changed for the better. The Bishop himself told me how irreverent people have become, how hostile to the Church and everything she stands for."

"I'm not saying that great upheavals do not cause damage or bring about great social change. The prevalent moral

laxness is a case in point. And the women are worse than the men. It would be hard to single out a society woman of today. Each and every one of them is so characteristic of the times, with her bleached hair, low-cut dress and frivolous talk—all attempts to manifest her approval of the so-called progressive civilization."

"I see," Toni said in a low tone. "In view of what you say, it must have been a demon of some sort that made me think up tunes that can only further this spirit of worldliness."

Kitzler shook his head. "You must not take the position, Herr Bruckner, that all music except church music exists only for amusement and pleasure. You could perhaps compose very serious and beautiful secular music, and in this way reach the masses who never see the inside of a church. Have you never heard a concert?"

"I have tried as much as possible to avoid listening to anything but organ music, because I didn't wish to divert my mind."

"So you have never heard a symphony?"

Toni leaned forward. "Yes, once I did," he said in a confiding tone, his eyes still radiant with the memory. "It was quite by accident. I was passing by the concert hall when I heard a theme which seemed full of mystery and promise. I stopped and listened for a long time. The second movement began gay and fresh, contrasting sharply with the following adagio motif, which was indescribably beautiful. I had never heard anything like it. I later learned that it was Beethoven's Fourth."

"Beethoven never wrote a more beautiful adagio," Kitzler

said. "But didn't you feel any desire to hear more music of this kind?"

"I was sure I could hear nothing better than that, and I was afraid to hear a music which would be stirring me, without giving inspiration. I wanted to avoid such disturbing influences, because I felt I was creating music for Our Lord. If I composed music for a living only, I could afford to be less particular. I wouldn't need to strive so for quality. And if I had no success with it, I could still dig potatoes." He looked for a moment at his big hands. "Or plow the fields."

Kitzler nodded. "Digging or plowing might be a lot easier too, but an apostle's instinct always leads him to where he must surmount the greatest difficulties."

"Is that so bad?" Toni asked. "May God forgive me if I am presumptuous, but unless He or His representatives forbid me to do so, I feel I must experiment with those disturbing harmonies."

"I can see what you mean," Kitzler said, "and I am sure that you have it in you to carry out your purpose. You must remember that the people of to-day are blind to all but the most obvious. You have to describe to them the transparent green of a young leaf in order to make them see it. Do you follow me?"

"Yes, I follow you. But do you think I can do this with a clear conscience toward God and the Bishop?"

"I am convinced of that," Kitzler said with a smile at once moved and comforting.

Toni gave a little gasp of wonder. His mind was in a

whirl, yet he felt that Kitzler not only meant well, but also spoke sensibly and sincerely.

"Here," Kitzler said, "take this score with you. It's Richard Wagner's Tannhäuser—ultra-modern music!" His smile was disarming. "Study it, and then decide whether you will listen to your inspirations."

Seeing Toni holding the big red book in wary fingers as though it were a lobster, Kitzler laughed. "If this work does affect your senses, what of it? Remember, you are a free man, Herr Bruckner. You are *not* a priest. Why don't you find a nice girl and get married?"

Toni blushed fiercely, astonished and alarmed that this clever man had seen to the very bottom of his emotional unrest. "Perhaps you have noticed the young girl who has been singing the solos in the cathedral recently," he said timidly. "It's Lois Bogner from St. Florian, the oldest girl of my former teacher there."

"Well, well, so she's musical too." Kitzler smiled encouragingly. "She'd make you a perfect wife."

"If I had only the courage to talk to her." Toni wrapped his big blue handkerchief around the album to protect it from his sweating hands. "Last Sunday I asked her to stay a little while after mass, and I began to play for her. But when I stopped, she was off and gone."

"You probably played on for hours," Kitzler said, smiling. "You can't woo a girl with music. Schubert has set us a warning example in that respect. Why don't you just tell her you love her?"

"Maybe I will," Toni said, trembling at the mere thought

of confiding to that Madonna-like creature that he wanted her as his wife.

He went stumbling out, shut the door behind him and stood panting. He looked at the book in his hands. "I'm going to play through this to-night," he said firmly. "If by doing it, I am unwittingly offending You, dear God, please pardon me."

A young couple, walking by and seeing his gestures, laughed out loud. Toni didn't know what was the matter. Perhaps I spoke a little with my hands, he thought, remembering dimly that these were friends of Lois. Probably they would tell her they had seen him acting like a fool. But a man had a right to be upset when he was making his most important decision. Should he go on writing masses, or change to instrumental music? And how would he feel after playing through this ultra-modern work?

He groped his way up the dark staircase to his room. The whole house seemed full of music. It whispered and sighed, as though it were enchanted and the shadows seemed to conceal strange and delicate faces.

Trembling, Toni sat down at the piano, put the music book Kitzler had given him up on the shelf and began to play. Strange! What a strange music, and yet how familiar. These were the kind of harmonies he had been hearing, yet had not dared to write down. A worldly art united sensuous melodies and immaculate chords under its resounding roof. Fascinated and bewildered, Toni played on. He did not read the words, nor did he try to visualize the heroes of the great opera. He drank down the polyphony as the

parched earth soaks up the rain. He was like one possessed. His oil lamp flickered, smoked and started to smell, but he did not notice this. He had to hear the ringing tones over and over again. Finally the lamp went out and now his own music surged forth, permeated with the moonlight that came in through his small windows.

The next morning he ran over to the theatre and when he did not find Kitzler there, he drew upon his courage and went to see him at his home. "Thank you, oh thank you," he cried and, paying no attention to Kitzler's protests, he kissed the conductor's hands. "You have opened up entirely new channels for me. But tell me in all honesty, is it permitted to write like that? Won't I be expelled or something?"

"Perhaps you will," Kitzler said lightly. "Wagner wrote that opera years ago. He met with great opposition then, and still does for that matter, but he keeps on writing just what he feels. Perhaps he will be dead and buried when he finally receives his full measure of recognition. As for your harmonies, they may not even serve to enlighten the present world, but may lead future generations on their way toward a divine destiny."

Who had told him this before? Toni wondered, and then saw Barbara before his eyes, the way she had looked in the choir loft, with her black eyes glowing, her sharp little teeth biting her lower lip, and the red cherries bobbing on her hat. She was bright and beautiful, a mature woman. Strange that she hadn't married either.

Toni and Kitzler played and talked on together the whole morning. When Toni said good-bye, Kitzler put a concert

ticket in his hand. "I meant to go to Vienna on Tuesday to hear the symphony orchestra there," he said, "but I can't make it. Do me a favor and go in my place."

"Do you really mean that?" Toni asked. "Are you quite sure you don't want to go yourself?"

"Perfectly sure," Kitzler said and smiled. "If it's the gift that's bothering you, you can give me in return your promise to write a symphony."

"But how would I dare?" Toni asked, thinking of Beethoven's Fourth.

"Those who *must* write, need not trouble to ask whether they dare," Kitzler returned almost impatiently.

After a pause Toni said: "If I do write a symphony you must thank Wagner, Beethoven and yourself for it—not me. Therefore you still won't have a return gift." Then, suddenly radiant, "I'll make a novena for you. That will be a more worthy token of gratitude for your kindness." And, picking up the ticket like a precious thing, he slipped it in the pocket of his well-worn coat and with many bows, took his departure.

II.

2.

Toni arrived in Vienna just before noon on May first. It was a beautiful day. He crossed the Ringstrasse with his big strides, the short wide legs of his organist's trousers blown by the spring breeze. In front of the Burgtheater he stopped,

took off his big black hat and wiped his forehead with his blue handkerchief. Across the street, the town hall, pearl-gray against the azure-blue sky, spread its wide wings. The public gardens were in full bloom. There were flower beds with bright masses of tulips, narcissi and carnations. The sweet scent of lilac floated, light as gossamer, through the air. Topping the trees, the Gothic steeple of St. Stephen's overlooked the city.

When shrill factory whistles announced the noon hour, Toni, looking reverently toward St. Stephen's, said to himself, "Organ pipes against factory whistles, eternity against the fleeting moment, it makes quite a contrast."

Industry, revolutionized, was pressing her steps. The visions of the Saints were as vapour in comparison with the reality of production, the voices of the apostles were cried down by the resounding advertisements, the language of the Bible was replaced by the brazen tongues of newspapers. The battle between faith and knowledge was on.

Toni directed his steps toward the center of the city. The sweet smell of the flowers remained in his nostrils. I am in Vienna, he thought, in Vienna, and ploughed his way through the crowds. On the Kärntnerstrasse he saw the May Corso. He had never before experienced such bustle and clatter. Omnibuses careened by; open carriages, garlanded by flowers and balloons and drawn by teams of horses decorated with green and red paper streamers, rolled along, cheered on by the people who ran alongside or flocked at the curb. The young girls wore little pink and blue hats perched on top of their gleaming curls. They giggled and pushed one

another, humming Strauss waltzes and occasionally giving a little touch to the corsages they wore on their low-necked dresses.

Toni became nervously exhilarated. The blood flowed through his veins like new wine. He looked about with heightening sensitivity at the young women throbbing with love of life. It was as if the touch at his elbow, the laughter at his ear would bring this effervescent element within his reach. They had a zest he would never have. Only in the choir loft could he move with surety and his own style.

A big looking-glass gave him back his image, as he knew it. The wide black coat hanging from his broad back, the short comfortable pants, the large collar exposing his neck to the collarbone. It seemed to him that the people moved back as though to see him better from a distance. He was an object of curiosity—a country yokel.

What an arrogant ass I am, he thought. As though God would look at me with friendlier eyes if I wore more sumptuous clothes. Toni, you old fool, he scolded himself, and, as he continued his walk through the narrow intimate little streets, beneath the archways and in front of the small houses, he looked at everyone, putting his whole love for all mankind into his smile.

On the Graben, he looked into the shop-windows. He read the titles of the latest books and finally halted before a picture gallery. There he gave a start. Barbara! Against a garish background of bright red, she was portrayed—practically naked! Her thick black hair fell over her bare shoulders, a pendant ruby on a long slender chain hung between

her full white breasts! The sight of her so vulnerable and unprotected gripped his heart. The joy of her nearness, although merely on canvas, was rent painfully by the knowledge that her merry spirit had led her to expose her young beauty to the eyes of the passer-by. He resolved to try to find her and to reason with her. She could not go through life as immodestly as all that!

He tore the door of the picture shop open and walked in. After a short wait a salesman approached him.

"I am interested in a picture in your window," Toni said, flushing. "The woman against the red background." Nervously he rubbed his big fists together. "My name is Bruckner," he said, bowing from the waist. He almost added that he was organist in the Linz cathedral but, remembering in time the seductive nature of the portrait in question, he interrupted himself. Putting his index finger inside his wide collar which seemed to be strangling him, he asked: "How much does it cost?"

"That picture is not for sale yet," the salesclerk, a young man in a stylish gray suit, said, and he managed to reduce his laugh to a hoarse dry cough. "The price would be rather high, I think. There are too many important persons involved," he said with a meaningful glance.

"But, perhaps, I could pay the price?" Toni looked pleadingly into the cool blue eyes which measured him from top to toe, and he noticed their expression changing from scorn to pity.

"That picture was painted by Makart," the salesman said in a kind voice. "You can recognize his ornate style imme-

diately in the richness of the lines and the extravagance of the decorations. Even the woman's hands are loaded with rings. Fine hands that don't need jewelry. Look!" He reached out into the shop-window and turned the picture toward them. He looked at Barbara, his head inclined, his light-blue eyes squinting. But Barbara was looking directly at Toni out of her gold frame, her black eyes shooting beams of lightning, her crimson mouth pouting a little as though set in a kiss. She seemed the very symbol of life: powerful, irresistible, enigmatic, simple and complex.

"Women are dying to be painted by Makart," the salesman told Toni. "You wouldn't believe it, but society women would go to any length to exhibit their naked charms on his canvasses. Personally, I don't think he is such a great artist, and I know I could show you better pictures that cost a lot less because they were painted by some poor devil who is not yet in fashion. Art doesn't really count nowadays. It's the artist who is venerated, if he is fortunate enough to become the rage."

"Look," Toni said, "I'm not really interested in buying pictures, nor can I afford such a hobby. But for this one picture I would give you all I have." He took his money-bag from his coat pocket and handed it to the salesman. "If that isn't enough, I can send you more from Linz; I have my May salary coming to me." He looked toward the wall, and, as he breathed deeply, he inhaled the bitter-sweet odor of oil paint.

"How can you get back to Linz if I take all this?" the clerk asked, smiling good-naturedly.

"Oh, I have my return ticket," Toni told him.

"I wish I could help you," the picture-dealer said, his long white fingers pressing down his carefully combed hair, "but you see this woman is living with Hecht, the critic."

"Hecht? Did you say *Hecht?*" Toni gasped.

"Yes. You must have heard the name. He is our best-known theatre and music critic. His criticism is sharper than knives. It has already caused one man to commit suicide, the builder of our opera-house, who was blamed for the bad acoustics there. If Hecht is going to set the price on this picture, you won't get a bargain."

So Barbara had married Hecht! Why, of course, he had wanted her even when his own wife was still alive. Barbara married! Married! A rushing noise started in Toni's ears. "Where can I find Hecht?"

"At the office of the *Neue Freie Presse,* of course," was the answer.

"I'll see him there," Toni said and, bowing several times, he left the shop. At first he walked through the streets like one blind. Barbara! The thought of marrying her had never entered his mind, but the knowledge of her marriage to someone else—to Hecht of all men—was hard to grasp. Why had he never been able to show her any affection?

"Look, the Giant Christopher," a young girl chirped, pointing at him, and several girls, coming toward him, linked arm to arm, broke into wild laughter. He felt excluded from all humanity. Amidst this gay crowd hunting for sensation and enjoyment, he was alone. Yet he felt that within his creative mind he embraced humanity at large. Barbara, dear Barbara, had realized that.

As he walked along, he slowly became more conscious of women and their lithe figures and of their efforts to draw attention. Their nearness flooded him with new and bewildering sensations. His blood alternately coursed wildly or stirred painfully. Vibrant music thrummed through his body. He trudged along, not daring to look to the right or to the left. Saint Anthony had been tempted, too, yet he had continued telling his rosary. Toni began to pray, but the fragrant flowers, the mellow air, the laughing women, distracted him. He began to feel lost in Vienna. He was homesick for the country, the cool smell of brown earth, the wind-swept fields. He looked up at the houses on the Ringstrasse and their architecture was as overloaded as Makart's paintings, and a combination of so many foreign styles that the district seemed to have no character of its own. Toni had been so anxious to come to Vienna, the city of those lovely waltzes which expressed so well his own simple joy of life, but now he would have liked to run home and fling himself down onto a green meadow and let the spring rain fall upon him and wash his heart clean.

A medley of bells called him, and, following their sound, he entered a church. He knelt down before the statue of the Blessed Virgin. "Oh Mary, most holy," he prayed, and the Mother of God looked down upon him with an expression of love such as he had never seen before. Strangely though, sweet, insinuating melodies seemed to float around him, melodies from the revelers in the Venusberg. And at the same time Barbara's picture seemed to hang in front of the Madonna's. Even in the semi-darkness of the church, Toni could recognize every detail, every shadow in the familiar

features. He prayed furiously, but he found no relief. Barbara's alto mingled with the singers' voices in Wagner's opera. Her portrait, so desperately different from the Madonna's, was right in front of him: the thick black hair, the high white forehead, the long thin chain with the ruby pendant.

It was sacrilege to remain in the church with such an image before his eyes. He jumped up and walked quickly toward the exit. But the bright sunshine blinded his eyes. Suddenly he was afraid of the world outside and withdrew into the church again, like a snail into its shell. With his eyes closed, he knelt down once more before Mary's statue.

Then something unbelievable happened. He seemed to see the Madonna raising her hand in blessing above his bowed head. The tension in his mind grew less. This could only mean that the Mother of God had forgiven him. He knelt before her, speechless. Slowly then he raised his head, and when finally he dared to open his eyes, he experienced the utmost bliss, for instead of the temptation he had feared, he knew nothing but peace. Faint organ music seemed to swing from the crystal chandeliers; the statue, white and smooth, like a virginal blanket of snow, gleamed in the darkness. He could not understand how this sudden change had come about. "I don't deserve Your grace," he murmured, "but I thank You for it." Gradually, his hands stopped their fluttering; his heart began to beat calmly. Nowhere could he find the happiness he found in church!

The editors were lounging in deep chairs. There were six of them, all thick-set and paunchy in build, and wearing

either blond moustaches or black pointed beards which looked for all the world as though they had been pasted on. The room was full of a bluish smoke that gave their soft doughy faces the waxen complexions of death masks. Hecht sat behind a huge desk and seemed to give the impression that he was the only one doing any work there. His appearance had not altered materially since Toni had last seen him, twelve years before. When he caught sight of Toni, he tilted back in his chair and cried: "Why, hello, my dear country bumpkin, come a little closer and let me have a good look at you."

Toni stepped forward amid the chuckles of the editors and approached the large desk, his shoes making a squeaking sound at every step.

As Hecht's cold blue eyes measured him from top to toe, Toni felt reduced to gawky absurdity. "You certainly have grown big and husky, my boy. That large frame of yours looks all the better for a bit of flesh. And your nose isn't quite so predominant now as it used to be," his former superior sneered, and, as he rolled a small paper ball between his palms, his wrists showed white below gold links set in impeccable cuffs.

Now was the time to say something, before Hecht's triumphant attitude reduced him to humble silence, Toni thought. He swallowed, trying to collect his wits.

"So you are playing your noisy masses in Linz now!" Hecht said. Turning to the editors who formed a willing and delighted audience, he explained: "Back in Windhaag, he used to smash our organ to pieces with his funny canons

and rounds. It is strange how some human minds work." His voice was tolerant. "Herr Bruckner's playing did not suggest a series of pictures about the parts of the mass, but a cyclic succession. He used to drive our poor pastor crazy. The one good thing about his cacophony was that it prevented the country folks from dropping off to sleep. They must have thought they were at a circus."

The fawning editors laughed in a way which expressed contempt for Toni's music and appreciation of Hecht's wit all in one. Toni looked at Hecht in reluctant admiration. Hecht was not only a very intelligent man, but a learned city man as well, who knew everything so much better than he did. For Toni had indeed played in cyclic succession though he had not really planned it that way, but the tunes had come by themselves as plants grow out of the soil. With his *Credo* theme in the beginning and the *Faith* motif at the end, a canonic or rondo structure had eventually evolved.

"I cannot help playing the way I do," he said. "For me it is a matter of inner compulsion. It's perhaps easier for you to select your favorite type of music because you are not composing, but writing *about* music." I'm already on the defensive, he thought, and determined to have his say before his courage failed him.

"So I'm only an echo while you are the creative artist!" Hecht broke in and his laughter had a harsh metallic sound. He is a real city man, Toni thought, but this time with pity.

"I'm not a genius," he said quickly, "and if I'm creative it's simply because I've always lived in the country—as you know—and I've felt God everywhere and in everything."

But he didn't know how to tell them that the landscape had vibrated in unison with his soul. He could only stand there, perplexed and silent.

"Before you begin your sermon, won't you tell us to what I owe the honor of this visit?" Hecht tapped a paper cutter against the edge of his desk as though he were still striking a wooden ruler against the grimy trembling fingers of the Windhaag boys and girls.

"I've come to ask a favor of you," Toni said. "I've come to ask you to sell me Barbara's picture."

Only Hecht's mouth laughed. His face was stony. And now Toni was sorry for Barbara too. She could not have adapted herself as much to the city as Hecht had. She was too much a part of Ansfelden. A picture of his home village rose before Toni's eyes, the quiet sloped roofs, the smoking chimneys, the old-fashioned wells, the blooming hedges, the cows lying in the meadows, motionless except for their swinging jaws, the wild young colts, and the pretty young girls whose hearts beat together with the woodland.

"So you like Barbara's picture," Hecht pounced, and now the editors' laughter, held back respectfully, broke free. "An old childhood love, wasn't she?"

"We were children together," Toni said.

"And now you are waking up—a late adolescence, I must say, and you want to hang her picture up in your bedroom. Isn't that so?" He picked up the little paper ball he had been toying with and shot it at Toni's chin. "Sorry," he said, "I meant to hit your heart." And all the fat editors laughed with him.

They're only mortal, Toni thought. Their power is only of this earth. His awkwardness left him suddenly. "I don't want to hang the picture in my bedroom or anywhere else. I want to destroy it because it is wicked."

"You don't say," Hecht answered, anger slowly flooding his face. "Then you are an even greater fool than I thought. What about the painters of the past who painted nudes, if you've ever heard of any of them. Were they indecent? Obscene?"

Toni remembered Michelangelo's nude figures which had seemed to him the utterance of a soul, because they were floating in space like an organ fugue in the dimness of the church. He wished desperately that he were clever so that he might give Hecht the right answer.

"It is a wicked picture," he could only repeat stubbornly. "It's a bad picture."

"Can you tell me why?" The ruler was going down against the beautiful desk in a series of furious slaps.

For a moment Toni bit his lips. "I don't know how to say it," he said then. "The body . . . it's just a human form. Nothing else."

This time the editors did not wait for the signal of Hecht's laughter. They roared with amusement.

"You don't know how ridiculous you are," Hecht said. "If I were to give you the picture—which I won't—how do you know Barbara would not sit for another one just like it?"

"I don't think Barbara would." Standing before Hecht's desk as in the old days, Toni nervously crumpled his hat.

"So you intend to approach her and implore her to watch out for her eternal soul?"

"I don't think I have any right to do that." Toni looked gently at Hecht. "But I can pray."

There was a pause during which everybody in the room looked uneasily at Toni as though he were a strange creature from some other world.

"You have remained a real peasant, Bruckner," Hecht said quite mildly. "And very limited in your outlook, I'm sorry to say. Now I'll show you a great work of art—still unfinished though—a picture Makart had the graciousness to send to my office because he wants Barbara to pose for him again."

He rang a small silver bell and a thin metallic sound echoed through the room. A servant entered and was told to fetch the picture. While they waited, the tension receded somewhat. "So you think the great Makart a bad painter," Hecht said chuckling. "Funny, very funny."

"That was not what I said," Toni corrected him politely. "I was referring to one particular picture only, the one I saw in the shop-window." And suddenly he knew what was wrong with it. "It has no background," he said quickly.

This statement was followed by a burst of laughter. "No background!" The editors couldn't get over it. "The red was bright enough, one would think."

"Yes, that's just it," Toni said. "The background is foreground too. There is no depth in it, no future, no destiny." He thought of the wide expanses in the cold landscape around Windhaag Hecht too knew so well. There he had experienced space, wide and eternal, where even Barbara's nude figure could float, freed from the heaviness of the earth, to lose itself in the universe.

"Now what do you say to that?" Hecht asked, as the big canvas was unrolled. "I shall explain to you what it represents. It is the entrance of Charles the Fifth into Antwerp. Is this bad too?" Squinting his eyes, he winked at his sycophantic followers.

"It has the same fault as the other picture," Toni told him.

"Too many beautiful women? It confuses you, doesn't it? It would prevent you from sleeping?"

There is no depth rhythm in it, Toni thought. All spiritual effect is absent. "They have no soul," he said finally. "They are only human. They have eyes, but no look; foreheads, but no expression."

"And what about their lips?" Hecht, now standing beside him, gave him a little push of male understanding.

"They could sing a melody, perhaps, but it would die with them," Toni said.

Hecht lost his patience. "Melody is the only music I recognize," he said sharply. "Give me a good march tune, an allegro voice, gay and sparkling. I'm bored to death with everything else."

As Toni began to think of the picture in musical terms, he had to admit that it had some melody emphasis. It was imitative, but it lacked polyphony, the deep spiritual basses, the free chromatics which would express the dynamics of space. It expressed gay sensuousness, but lacked symbolic force, the tone colors which would render inwardness and the soul unconfined. He looked gently at Hecht. "I think it's easier to create when you believe. I think there is no great art without God."

"Faith is for the weak who need a crutch." Hecht stood before Toni now, his arms crossed, his slender figure seemingly made of steel. "I am a man of facts. I believe what I see."

"Then your belief is as flat as this Dutch landscape," Toni said. He was no longer afraid. These men looked up to Hecht as to a semi-deity, because they had no God.

Hecht had returned to his desk, humming a popular song. This was the end of his interview, Toni felt, and he went toward the door. Nobody called him back, so he walked out into the entrance hall and as he crossed the tiled floor, it seemed to him that the whole city was one big checkerboard, consisting of cold straight lines, in harsh white and black, without colors or soft shades. It had been silly of him to hope that his voice would be heard or understood; and it had been just as childish to think that by attending a symphony concert he would become sufficiently inspired to reach beyond the organ and choose the rich volume of the orchestra to bring a God-directed music into the concert-house. He went straight to the railroad station.

Riding along in the train, he became more and more excited, as he slowly realized the need of new sound-worlds which should express the spiritual, the bodiless and the boundless. Oh, if he could only do it! If he could only show that eternity and the spiritual domain were more important than anything physical or temporary which depended on them. He felt more than he knew that if he wanted to illustrate infinity, he would have to penetrate into regions where he would be even lonelier than he was now. When he saw his face in the window of his compartment, his mouth was

half-open, the lower lip protruding as though he had just uttered a cry, and his eyes were staring like those of a visionary. This was the face of a man frightened by his own power. Toni stuck out his tongue at his reflection. "Don't you worry. You're not the one to set the world afire, and if you did, your power would come from Someone Else." And he reached for his rosary.

* * *

Walking through the town of Linz, Toni had the image of St. Florian constantly before his eyes, and he longed to be in the place where he had found shelter immediately after the loss of his father and the breaking up of his family. The monastery was his second home. On a day as eventful as this, he ought to be there. Instead of approaching the sexton's house, in which he had been given a room, Toni wished he were going to the monastery where even through the building stones music seemed to flow. Instead of the small segment of sky between the roofs, there should have been the wide horizon above the hills, with wisps and sheets of clouds or myriads of stars. In place of a bare lobby and a winding staircase, there should have been a high-ceilinged gallery with sunbeams dancing fitfully in its antique-filled rooms, transforming the lofty ornamentation into polyphonies and harmonies alive with cadenzas, trills and runs. But, above all, there should have been the church with its wonderful organ, accessible to him even by night. There he could have freed himself of the weight of music that surged through him.

Only a few days before, Kitzler had suggested changing

from organ to instrumental music. To-day the spiritual necessity of this tremendous shift had become evident. Instrumental music was the medium for bringing God down from the mysterious Infinite within the grasp of people's minds. The orchestra with its eternally moving flow would shake their souls and make them aware of the Divine immanent in all the world around and fill their hearts with loving reverence for God.

When he inserted the key into the keyhole, his loneliness overwhelmed him. He was afraid of the empty room he was coming home to. He groped his way up the stairs and the drumming of his footsteps and the beating of his heart were the only noises in the deep quiet. The orchestra in his head had stopped playing, yet, strangely enough, even through the momentary intermission, he could feel some dissonance. When he reached the last landing, he saw that a light was on in his room, and he took the last steps running. He opened the door and shrank back.

"Hello, Toni," Barbara said. "You've made yourself a nice retreat here. You thought you could get away from everybody, didn't you?" She got up from the chair beside his bed and took both his hands in hers.

"But Barbara," Toni said, "you shouldn't be here. Don't you see you can't just come up here to see me as though we were still children."

"Oh, so you are afraid for your reputation?" Her voice had the warmth and gaiety of the old days, but she did not seem the old Barbara. A dark lock, falling over her forehead, gave her eyes a smoky look, and her slender fingers

were fluttering nervously. "I've passed you once or twice on the street, but you were gazing at the clouds as usual. You don't waste much time on the world around you and certainly not on women. Or perhaps I'm not quite to your taste," she prattled on.

"Why didn't you stop me?" he asked. "It would have been quite all right to talk to me in the street, but I can't let you stay here another minute. Come on, please. Put on your hood and I'll take you to your hotel."

"Teacher Bruckner!" she laughed. "You'll need your ruler to get me out of here." She picked up her hood and threw it into a corner, then sat down on a chair and stretched her long slender legs out in front of her. "I came because I couldn't fall asleep in the hotel, the dingiest little place I've ever seen."

While she spoke, the clock of the near-by church struck ten. "You must go, Barbara," Toni said. "It's ten o'clock and you know that no young lady is on the street at this hour." As he went over to the corner for her hood, he became aware of her questioning glances. She was still so innocent. She did not know any better. It was up to him to protect her. But when he handed her her hood, she reached up, pulled him down and kissed him quickly, then got up and went skipping through the room, her high heels making a staccato noise upon the floor.

"You shouldn't have done that," Toni said. He could hardly speak. His heart was pounding in long, muffled beats, and in his ears roared the universe.

The next minute she stood before him again, and looked

at him with the old look, a quiet look, in her vivid face—like an *andante intermezzo* in an *allegro* piece. "I love you so much, Toni," she said, and put her arms around his neck.

For a moment everything swam before his eyes and he felt hot and cold in turn. "You mustn't say that," he said sharply. His voice was unusually high and loud. Gently he freed himself.

"But it's true and I want you to marry me!" Her childish lack of modesty brought a quick smile to his face.

"But I can't marry you, Barbara. You know it's out of the question. It wouldn't be legal." He swallowed hard as though his throat were sore.

"You talk like a teacher," she cried. "It's easy enough for you. You don't know what temptation is. You're an arrogant ascetic fool!" Her fine nostrils quivered nervously in rhythm with her black lashes.

"You can't see into another person's heart, Barbara. I'm only human too."

"But if you feel the way I do, why can't we be happy together?" She took his hands in hers. Her palms were smooth and warm, but the backs of her hands were ice-cold. She spoke very quietly and more and more quickly—*pianissimo accelerando:* "Please, Toni, please, marry me! We could go away together. Anywhere. It doesn't matter any longer that you don't make much money. I can sing now. I can make enough for the two of us. And I can mend your socks and shirts."

"But Barbara, you are talking utter nonsense. You know I can't marry you." He pushed her a little further away.

She ground her teeth. "You, you!" she shouted in a wild rage. "You are too good for the women of this world, aren't you? Not even Lois, your little Madonna, quite meets with your approval. Isn't that so?" Her voice was hoarse as though she had talked too much or too long. Her facial expression too had changed. Her curls stood out in all directions, her black eyes moved constantly, glittering between her lids and disappearing beneath them like flashing lights, and there were red spots on her pale cheeks.

From below, the shuffling steps of the sexton could be heard and a faint odor of incense floated up through the room.

Toni, who had flushed at the mention of Lois' name, became even more embarrassed. "We are causing scandal, Barbara," he said, nervously pulling at his red ears.

"What do I care?" she flared up. "Are you or aren't you going to marry me?"

"But how can I marry you, Barbara?" he asked. "You already belong to one man. You mustn't even think of another. You must drive all these thoughts out of your head. Otherwise how can you hope that God will look upon you with pleasure?"

"If you are afraid of Hecht's revenge, we needn't tell him. We can love each other secretly. He need never know."

He caught her wrists when she reached up for him once more and held them in his big brown hands. "You don't mean that, Barbara. I know you better." As he said it, he saw her look beyond him, where, on the wall above his holy-water basin, a picture hung, covered with a black veil.

"Who is that?" she asked and when he did not answer at once, she flew into another rage. "So that's it," she cried. "There is a woman in your life after all. And all covered up! She must be really shameful. Let me see her!"

But she had already torn away from him and was crossing the room in light big jumps like a cat. He tried to protect his compositions which were piled up on the floor, the motets neatly separated from the four-voiced masses, but she kicked them with the tip of her lacquered shoe, and they went down in a disorderly heap. With a quick movement she tore the black veil from the wall and Frau Bruckner, only recently deceased, looked down on her, the familiar features ennobled and still in death.

Barbara stumbled back and put her hands before her face. "Mutter Bruckner," she cried and began to sob desperately. "How often she pleaded with me to leave you alone! How often she told me that such a man-crazy woman was not for her Toni."

"Sh, sh, please don't cry," Toni said, gently stroking her hair. He had never seen her so sweet, so weak and womanish, clinging for support. He stared at her bent back and her rounded shoulders beneath the thin silk. His mother had loved the girl, but she had never approved of her. Barbara will never stop seeking something better than she has, she had often said.

"Let's get out of here," Toni said hoarsely. "Let's take a short walk, and you can take the eleven o'clock train to Vienna." But Barbara would not listen.

"She told me to leave you to the Lord," she sobbed. " 'Of

course, you love him,' she used to say, 'but only until he's yours. Then you'll tire of him. Leave him to his music and to the Lord.' "

Holding on to Toni's lapels, without a sound, without a motion, her lips pressed closely together, Barbara cried into his jacket. "Please, Mother, help me now," Toni begged silently. "Pray for me up in heaven that all the Saints may give me their support." Barbara nestled closer, all her blooming womanhood reaching out for him, but Toni remained immobile, only his lips moving.

After a while she dried her eyes and looked up at him, an expression of resignation and of pity in them. "What a shame that you can't love me, Toni. How well I would have looked after you. I would have fought all your battles for you and won them."

"You don't really love me, Barbara. I assure you. You only think you do. You are a married woman and you know what an awful sin it is to be unfaithful."

She hesitated for a second. "Sorry to destroy your illusions," she said finally, getting up and throwing her cape around her with an unconscious grace. "I'm not married."

"Not married," he cried. "You can't possibly mean it." He looked at her helplessly.

She smiled wryly at his reaction. "You are shocked, I see. But believe me there are millions of women like me," she said. "If you want to get along in the world, you have to make concessions." She walked to the door and he followed her across the room.

"You can't go on like that, Barbara. As long as you want to be with Hecht, why don't you marry him?"

"I'll tell you one good reason why," she said with a mixture of anger and despair. "Because I am in love with you. Because I have waited for a long time for you to wake up and feel like a man. Because you are in a position now to take a wife and because, as long as you haven't chosen, your choice may still fall upon me, and for this I want to be free."

Toni stood rigid, trying to take in all she had said. Barbara went on in a dreamy voice. "How beautiful it would be if I didn't have to leave you now. If I knew nothing of the hard, cold and rich life for which I longed when I was younger." She sighed.

Toni shivered. She wouldn't have spoken like that a year ago. Or he had never known her. "Let me play for you, Barbara," he begged. "It may help you get rid of all your sinful thoughts."

But she held a hand before her mouth and yawned quite distinctly. "To you music may be a substitute for love, but it isn't for me." After having said it, she walked out without haste.

"I'll take you to the hotel," he called, reaching for his hat.

In the street, walking silently beside her, he thought: Poor Barbara, poor country girl, eager for the city and for success. If I married her, if I gave all my life to her happiness and to the salvation of her soul, would it please the Lord? He did not love Barbara, not with that shy sweet emotion he felt for Lois Bogner. But perhaps this terrible revelation of Barbara's was a sign from God telling him he was not worthy to compose that bodiless music which would

symbolize eternity. Perhaps he had exalted himself by trying to make himself a medium between God and man, he, who was not ordained.

"Barbara," he said, remembering that the girl beside him needed comfort. "Don't go back to Vienna. Go to St. Florian instead. Stay with your father for awhile."

"Why shouldn't I go to Vienna?" She shrugged. "You are the last one to care whether I go there or not."

He talked gently to her as though she were a child. "But I do care, Barbara. We grew up together. I know that you are made of fine material. Remember how we used to go to church together? How we marched in the procession side by side? And you belonged to a sodality, Barbara. You are a child of Mary. You can never get lost."

Her eyes pleaded for him to go on as if she wanted to hear more.

"Your conscience is sleeping now, but it will wake up if you give it half a chance. Go to St. Florian. Sing in the choir; use your beautiful voice for the glory of God."

"That might be a good idea," she said reluctantly. She was looking so tired. They came at last to the railroad station and there was a train to St. Florian due before the express to Vienna. "I'm all right now, Toni. You don't have to wait with me," she said. "I'm sorry I came to your room. It was stupid of me. I don't know why I did it."

"In St. Florian you'll forget it, Barbara. You'll be happy just to be home again. It's the most peaceful place."

She glanced up at him. "You're right, Toni, and I'm wrong. And don't you ever forget it."

Presently the train rolled in and she kissed him good-bye on both cheeks the way his sister Nanny used to. "Now don't you ever get things twisted in your mind like I did," she whispered. On the steps of her compartment she leaned back. "Remember your mother," she called. "She knew what she was talking about."

Then the train left Toni standing there alone, staring at the red light on the last coach as it grew smaller and smaller.

He could not go home right away. He ran through the streets of Linz, stumbling a little like one drunk. And sometimes he thought there was a curb where there was none and he brought his foot down with a crash. Perhaps if he went home and worked all night, then, early in the morning, he could go over to the cathedral and everything would be as usual.

But now he was afraid of his room filled with the memory of a woman, her perfume, the chair just in the center, the music, his neat, God-dedicated music strewn pell-mell over the floor. Strangely enough he did not mind the disorder which had been brought into this music, built upon strict rules which he had gone over and over and which he now planned to replace by harmonies completely metaphysical in spirit.

But was he worthy to unlock the mysteries of eternity?

A few hours ago everything had seemed so simple, his path so clear. Now he was confused. He lacked the sureness of the creative spirit. He walked on and on, around the Haupt Platz to the railroad station and back again to the sexton's

house. From moment to moment his confusion grew worse. He heard women's voices luring him. He felt as though he had been carried off to the Venusberg. He tried to pray, but it was in vain. He went back and forth in front of his house. Horror-stricken, he looked up at his window, then went on walking. This was a struggle between heaven and hell. He was like a mountaineer who raises his eyes toward the summit and loses his footing on the rocks he is climbing. Reaching for the light of eternity whose brilliance dimmed the light of the instant, he had lost his relationship with his fellow-men and was out of touch with the world about him.

Desperately he held on to the reality of the trees, the windows, the doors. There were fourteen lightning conductors in this street, two statues and four wrought-iron boards. It was comforting to recognize the things he had become used to seeing every day. They were still here. They had not yet collapsed into space. From the cathedral to the railroad station he counted one hundred and fifty-four windows, twenty-six houses, four stores and one doctor's office.

By six o'clock in the morning, he had counted every conceivable thing in the streets surrounding the cathedral, and at the portal he had a moment of giddiness. The sexton looked at him with a sneer, when he asked to be taken to the Bishop. In the corridor, leaning against the door of the sacristy and holding on tightly to the door handle, Toni could hear the conversation inside. "I think he is drunk," the sexton said, "and he had a very showy-looking woman in his room last night."

"Where is he?" the Bishop asked impatiently. "I want to see him at once."

The sexton tore the door open and Toni practically fell inside and almost at the Bishop's knees. "What is wrong with you, my poor Bruckner?" the Bishop asked gently, lifting him to his feet. "You look exhausted and sick." He motioned to the sexton to go away. "When did you eat last?"

"Yesterday morning," Toni said faintly, "but I couldn't eat now."

"Do you want to go to Communion?"

Toni looked at the Bishop in despair.

"Shall I call your Father Confessor?"

"There are eight buttons on your robe," Toni said, "and two rings on your finger."

"I'll tell you something, Bruckner. We'll go inside the cathedral. No, not to play the organ. Just to pray together."

Toni nodded, holding onto the Bishop's hand, as though he were a child.

Before the altar the Bishop prayed, but Toni was unable to speak to the Lord as on other days. He counted the candles, then the statues, and finally the gladiolas in the high-stemmed vases. The church was quite empty and after a while the Bishop pulled Toni down onto one of the benches and spoke with him gently. "I shall miss your playing, my dear Herr Bruckner. You must try to get well as fast as you can. Meanwhile the cathedral is still full of your music. Even now, sitting here, I can hear the tones of the organ surging deep and high through the nave, and all your devotion, that knows neither limit nor restraint, is in the harmonies I hear."

The cathedral *was* music. Toni himself could hear it. The high slim pillars, growing up out of the floor, spread near the

roof into branches which soared higher and higher, like the themes which had torn themselves free from the turmoil of his tone-world. Like the fine young branches that reached out of the crown of these pillar-trees, his motifs had expanded into space. Toni held his head sideways, listening, but instead of organ music he suddenly heard the siren-like voices of women. He felt sick. He placed a hand on his stomach and breathed deeply like one who is afraid of suffocating. The Bishop watched every one of his gestures. Toni leaped to his feet, forgetting his customary respect for the Bishop, and began walking up and down the nave, his heavy steps resounding on the stone floor. He counted the holy pictures on the walls, the pews, the crucifixes, the chandeliers. Finally he staggered back to the pew where the Bishop knelt, praying. Then he stood and raised his shoulders in a helpless gesture. "The devil must have a hold over me," he whispered, and big tears were running down his hollow cheeks.

"The devil is always fighting for our souls," the Bishop said in a subdued voice, "but do you think God will abandon you as long as you fight back? And isn't that just what you are doing—torturing your poor mind with all those numbers?"

"Your Eminence does not know," Toni began, wiping away the tears with the back of his hand, "but I have asked for too much."

"If you have been too ambitious, you have been so only because nothing you have accomplished so far has seemed to you sufficiently fine for our Lord. Do you think you offended Him when you played and played until the roof of

the church seemed to open to allow your music to ascend higher and higher until it made a breach in the sky?"

Toni leaned over the pew, glancing deep into the Bishop's clever and quiet eyes. Then he began to sob wildly. "I'll lose my mind like Schumann did. I know it."

The Bishop's forehead creased, then he nodded several times as though he had reached a decision. He stood up and, resting his hands flat on top of the pew, he said: "You aren't going to lose your mind. We are going to do something about this at once." Then he bowed his head, whispered a short, fervent prayer and once more took Toni's trembling hand and led him back to the sacristy.

There he pressed a rosary into Toni's hands. "Here, tell your beads if you wish. But don't run away. I'll be right back."

Obediently, Toni sat down upon a chair. His fingers moving along the string of beads, he stared fixedly at a crucifix on the wall, shuddered, closed his eyes and fell asleep.

When he awoke, he heard the voice of Doctor Muller, the Bishop's physician. "It's a nervous condition. A short rest cure in Bad Kreuzen will straighten him out."

"What shall we pack for him?" the Bishop asked. "I mean what will he take with him to occupy his mind?"

"I would suggest you ask his teacher what books Herr Bruckner would normally consult if he felt like composing. I gather from what you have said that he is over-conscientious about music theory."

"I won't write," Toni said weakly. "Please, don't bother about any books."

The Bishop and the physician exchanged a meaningful

glance. "The Lord is testing you as He tested Job," the Bishop said, "so that out of suffering and faith you can create the great forms of your God-professing art."

Toni said nothing but stared in front of him, breathing heavily. Then they gave him something to drink that had a sharp, pungent smell and a bitter taste.

"May I have a few words with Herr Bruckner alone?" the Bishop requested, and the doctor nodded.

To Toni's surprise, the Bishop led him down to the catacombs. "Herr Bruckner," he said, "I hope and wish that you will live a long and rich life and give the world many proofs of your great talent. But when, sometime in the far future, God calls you, as he calls all of us, I want you to know that we have reserved a place for you here, among us. Now you understand that I wouldn't think of telling you this if I were not absolutely sure that you will live and die in a state of grace."

At these words, Toni's pale cheeks flushed. He bowed awkwardly. He cleared his throat and, hesitatingly, let his trembling fingers glide over the carved wood sarcophagus. "But I'm not ordained," he said. "I'll never be a priest."

"I don't think you will either, yet you belong to us. Like a priest, you too are going through several consecrations. This test the Lord has sent you is the first step—as *we* start as sub-deacons, now you too receive your first orders. Laypeople are just fulfilling duties some of which require no thought. You, as a priest of music, are fulfilling a task. I am sure the Lord will be with you."

When Toni bent over the Bishop's hand, the Bishop gave

him his blessing. "Let us go back now," he ordered gently, and Toni followed him with uncertain steps.

He had a light breakfast in the novices' dining-room. Even the coffee went down with difficulty, almost as though his throat were sore. Then he left the cathedral precincts, accompanied by a young priest with an open, candid face. The Bishop's carriage stood in front of the cathedral door. The young priest helped Toni in and then stepped inside too. "Are you quite comfortable, Herr Bruckner?" he asked, as the horses pulled away. Then he wrapped a warm blanket around Toni's knees.

"You surely aren't going to wait on me!" Toni's dark mind lit up for a moment as though pierced by lightning.

"Why not? The Bishop said you have served priests all your life."

"Not all my life, only when I was a boy and then it was the custom for an altar boy to do so."

"But it's more than a custom, it's Christian duty to help those who are in need."

Toni wanted to argue, but he counted the priest's buttons instead. There were fifteen buttons on his cassock and five colored ribbons hanging from his missal.

II.

3.

May 2, 18—

Your Eminence:

We arrived here safely at noon, as your coachman will have told you. Herr Bruckner did not cause any difficulties

for me, but tortured himself, counting everything his eyes lighted on. Only once did he burst out: 'Oh, Father, to be free even for just a few minutes from this intolerable strain!'

The doctor saw Herr Bruckner shortly after our arrival and I grieve to say that the interview was far from being a success. As a matter of fact, and much to my surprise, Herr Bruckner walked out of the doctor's room. Sitting in the adjoining hall, I had heard the doctor's voice and thought his approach not a very tactful one. 'You seem in a run-down condition,' he said kindly enough. 'Don't let this worry you. It is the most frequent cause of emotional disturbance and the easiest to cure. An overdose of work and a bit too much love, I suppose, have brought you into this state.'

I felt most uncomfortable, knowing Herr Bruckner for the kind of person he is. I heard no answer, just the doctor's amused chuckle. A moment later, Herr Bruckner stood beside me, looking unbelievably dignified. But later he went back to see the doctor again. He apologized for having left him so abruptly and assured him that he would accept his help most gratefully, provided that the matter of love were completely ignored. 'I have never had anything to do with women, so why should I have the thought of them on my mind?' he said very definitely.

I shall report to Your Eminence regularly, as I promised.

Devotedly in Christ, F. Foster.

May 5, 18—

Your Eminence:

Yesterday Herr Bruckner had an exceedingly bad day. Fortunately, I had entered the dining-room a few moments

before him and was therefore able to ask a very pleasant-looking lady to go back to her room and change her dotted blouse, giving her the reasons for so unusual and even daring a request. Herr Bruckner's condition was such that I feared he, who is normally so shy and diffident, would walk around the lady uninhibitedly, moved solely by the urge to count the round spots on the dark material. In the morning I had walked with him through the village, avoiding the woods with their abundance of trees (which he makes every effort to count), but Herr Bruckner was gesticulating and muttering in such a way that the village boys ran after him, howling and screaming with laughter. The lady, mentioned above, returned to the dining-room, after changing her blouse, and looked with interest and concern toward our table. In the next minute she and Herr Bruckner rose almost simultaneously and approached each other with signs of joy and emotion. It seems that she had once been his teacher.

I consulted Doctor Streicher and he was of the opinion that further meetings between the two could do no harm to our patient. The lady is married and is here in the company of her ailing husband. Later that afternoon, I sat with her and Herr Bruckner on a bench in the garden, ready for any emergency, but they were so engrossed in old memories that they forgot all about me. 'Don't you remember, Toni,' she asked him, 'how you always looked out of the window at the clouds, and no matter how hard I tried to hold you with the reality of the present, I could not attract your mind? And now you focus your interest upon counting, the driest and most realistic thing in the world. In those

days, strangely enough, I thought you were wasting your time in day-dreams, now, however, I think just the opposite.' 'When I was a boy, I was always thinking of God,' Herr Bruckner said mournfully, 'I wanted to become an angel then. Remember? Now I seem to have allied myself with the devil'. He grew silent, but, from his deeply wrinkled forehead and the tortured expression in his eyes, I knew that he was counting again. I was alarmed, afraid that the doctor had been too optimistic. But that night Herr Bruckner asked for some note paper for the first time, and then he wrote steadily for over an hour, drawing his round black note heads neatly and carefully. May God grant that this mean the beginning of his recovery!

Devotedly in Christ, F. Forster.

May 7, 18—

Your Eminence:

This morning we had another visit with the doctor. 'Why are you in such a hurry to compose, Herr Bruckner?' he asked. 'The world has existed without your music for almost two thousand years. Why don't you let it wait another month and then give it something really great?' 'One shouldn't waste a minute of one's life,' Herr Bruckner replied. 'Sometimes things have to mature, to develop gradually,' Doctor Streicher said. Herr Bruckner did not answer, but leafed through his notebook and, as though he had suddenly remembered something, he wrote down a few more of his precise bars. The doctor said: 'I wouldn't start on more serious plans yet, if I were you. But I see no reason why you should not compose lighter music. It will occupy

your mind and keep you in practice too.' Then, for the first time since we have been here, Herr Bruckner smiled. 'Perhaps that's just what I will do,' he said. All afternoon he seemed very happy, writing music, but in the phases of exhaustion that followed each of his flashes of inspiration, he began the tiresome counting-business again. 'Suppose you try to relax for a while,' I said, 'and come for a walk with me.' He looked up at me then and I was heart-sick over the misery in his face. 'Don't you remember that not a minute should be wasted?' he said. 'Who says you are wasting any time?' I said quietly. 'By going for a walk you'll be able to relax so that your mind will be fresh for your task. You'll be doing it for God.' That was apparently the right approach. At once he jumped up and came with me. It was the first time during our walks through the woods that he didn't count the trees. I am beginning to feel quite hopeful.

Devotedly in Christ, F. Forster.

May 10, 18—

Your Eminence:

I have the sorry duty of telling you that our patient's condition has gone from bad to worse. He has not even combed his hair of late, nor has he permitted me to do it for him. 'Not a minute must be wasted on anything,' he says, but he counts senselessly and incessantly all the objects around him. Yesterday, at noon, however, things took a turn for the better. One of the guests brought the conversation around to the topics of monks and education in convent schools. He claimed that priests had a very damaging influence upon the young boys, narrowing their outlook and keeping them

from following their natural instincts. 'Present company exempted,' he said with a smiling side-glance at me. Herr Bruckner spoke up suddenly, and vehemently, as though it had taken some time for the conversation to penetrate his consciousness. He gave a flaming speech indeed, talking coherently and with an almost holy conviction. He described the gay spirit of the fathers, their love of life and its clean and healthy amusements, their admiration for beauty, their cultivation of the fine arts. It was a very extraordinary speech for Herr Bruckner, even in normal times, for it has often seemed to me that his power of imagination and his feeling for music have devoured everything else. After he had spoken, he lapsed back into his previous state of indifference toward the outside world and of absorption in his number problems. Later the friendly lady from his native village sat down beside us near the warm springs. 'To-day I realized again how God is still a sealed book for so many people,' she said. 'And how important it is to break this seal.' 'I'm not clever enough to do it,' Herr Bruckner said, lifting his chin in rejection. 'There are others better equipped than I.' 'Some are wise without book-wisdom,' the lady said with a Sphinx-like smile. I noticed that he did a little writing before he went to bed.

Devotedly in Christ, F. Forster.

May 14, 18—

Your Eminence:

I had a very interesting discussion to-day with Doctor Streicher. He does not believe that Herr Bruckner is busying himself with counting merely in atonement for his im-

agined sins, for in that case he presumes that Herr Bruckner would change the type of his penance occasionally. Your idea that the patient is frantically trying to hold on to static things like numbers, because he is afraid of the dynamics of a supernatural world, appealed to the doctor very much. He blamed himself for not having reached an earlier and better understanding of the patient, but, indeed, it is not often that so great a talent is bestowed on one so simple and modest, or that the mind of a genius is so insistent on following strict rules and regulations. Considering Herr Bruckner from this viewpoint, the doctor believes that since he was once obliged to study harmony very thoroughly in order to be able to go beyond its limits, so he must now explore the domain of numbers before he can allow himself to focus upon the visionary image of number-bodies and venture further still into Infinity. He suggested to Herr Bruckner to-day that he might invite a mathematician who would introduce him to the field of mathematical analysis. Herr Bruckner looked as though he had no conception at all of what the doctor was talking about. Then he smiled a little self-consciously and said, 'I want my music to remain very simple so that people can understand it.' Doctor Streicher explained to him how, step by step, he might reach his goal, and Herr Bruckner nodded emphatically and said, 'That's why I am writing a mass now for Our Lord. That's my good-bye present to Him before I turn to instrumental music. The idea must have come to me as an answer to my prayers and the Bishop's.' Then he leaned forward and, beaming with happiness, confided: 'The Bishop likes me. I know he is praying for me.'

Your Eminence, your prayers are indeed most effective, and I beg you to continue them for Herr Bruckner's sake.

Devotedly in Christ, F. Forster.

May 18, 18—

Your Eminence:

This is a very brief note to inform you that to-day, in the village church, Herr Bruckner played his new Credo for his former teacher, Miss Greti, and me. I could hear in it all the religious wars since the days of the Synods of Constantinople and the victories of the Church Militant over the heretics in the middle ages. Then from the darkness of this world he turned to the dawn in a Gloria of exultant reverence. 'What did you see before you when you composed this?' I asked him. 'Why, note heads, of course,' he said, looking at me in a puzzled way. Note heads! Oh Lord Who blessed the meek, what a cornucopia of blessings You have showered over our friend!

Devotedly in Christ, F. Forster.

* * *

Toni wrote down the last bar, then dried the page carefully. He smiled. He had been undecided as to whether he should compose for the organ or the orchestra, but now he had written a mass that was a little symphony in itself, and he was delighted. He went over to Doctor Streicher's office, and asked him whether he thought him well enough to leave Bad Kreuzen.

Doctor Streicher smiled wryly. "It was you who made your own diagnosis, you who prescribed the cure and followed it too. Why then should I have the final word?"

Toni smiled back, the carefree smile of the healthy man. "I do hope I haven't hurt your feelings," he said. "And please, don't think I have had anything to do with my recovery. It was God Who helped me get over my nervous state."

The doctor shook his hand heartily. "I'm not a church-going man," he told Toni, "but this much I will admit, it was the mass you wrote and not the hot springs here that cured you."

As Toni walked back to his room, he thought of Father Forster. The good priest had seemed somewhat nervous and tense during the last week. The days had been so full for Toni that he had given no thought to anything but his work. There always was the next part of the mass to be worked out. And because he felt that the sacrifice of the mass was the Church's supreme act of worship, he was anxious to write music for it, and he poured out upon it his best efforts. He experienced much difficulty in making his choice from among the abundance of themes that surged through him. He now found it hard to believe that there had once been a time in St. Florian when he had had to search for melodies.

Toni was very happy. He liked the warm rich feeling of spiritual fertility. He loved the strain of choosing among the motifs that crowded each other in his mind. He was obsessed by his inner compulsion to bring them into logical

order, enrich them and prune them to perfect shape. He found it hard to force his music into the time limit of a High Mass. There was so much to express. Was it not the Lord Himself Who offered the Sacrifice through His priest? "This is My Body!" the words were spoken in the first person. Christ Himself, the Eternal Priest, offered the mass to His Eternal Father. No music seemed quite adequate to the task and, even now with his work finished, Toni considered modifications, went over certain parts in his mind, wondering if he had given them enough highlighting, enough emphasis.

Father Forster came at a running pace from the hospital pavilion, and Toni noted that his whole bearing was one of extreme anxiety. "Do you think you are well enough to come back with me to Linz?" the priest asked, seizing Toni's arm.

"Has anything happened to the Bishop?" A cold shiver ran up Toni's spine.

Father Forster was scarcely able to utter a word. "He has been arrested. He is in prison now," he said then with a groan.

Toni looked at him aghast. The Bishop in prison! It was incredible.

"It is because of the Pastoral Letter," the priest tried to explain, but Toni interrupted him.

"You'll tell me on our way back," he said. "Quickly now. Let's try to catch the noon train. We can have our baggage sent."

Father Forster could only nod. Heavy beads of perspiration stood on his brow and his hands trembled.

They ran down the gravelled pathway to the road. Toni had not run so fast since his boyhood, and the rapid pace helped him forget his shame temporarily. It was unforgivable never to have asked after the Bishop, never even to have thought of the holy man. If he had known that the Bishop was in trouble, he would have hurried, sick or well, to his side, and played the organ for him day and night.

They hailed a carriage and the driver, a little doubtful at first at the sight of the two breathless, dishevelled men, became respectful when he noticed Father Forster's clerical vest. "You ran as though it were a matter of life and death," he said.

"It is almost," Father Forster said, his voice husky.

They were hardly settled in the carriage, when the horses started off. Then the father turned to Toni. "I'll explain the situation to you as far as I know it. It will be a relief for me to do so. You see, Parliament has brought in a bill suppressing the Church's right in all matters concerning marriage and education. The bill was committed to Emperor Francis Joseph and when he signed it, it became a law."

"What about the Concordate with the Pope?"

"It has been entirely disregarded. Of course, the Bishop objected publicly in a Pastoral Letter which he read from the pulpit last Sunday."

"And they dared to send him to prison!" It was horrible, a real nightmare. "Why didn't you tell me before that something was going on in Linz?" Toni asked in despair.

"The Bishop requested me not to. He wanted nothing to interfere with your recovery."

Once more Toni was engulfed by a feeling of abject shame. The Bishop had thought of him and he had forgotten the Bishop!

"Do you think we can make the train?" Father Forster asked the driver.

"I'll do my best," the man answered, swinging the carriage around the curb.

The horses had scarcely been reined in, when the two men jumped from the carriage, leaving a gold ducat on the seat for the driver.

They learned that they had ample time to buy their tickets. In fact, there was no sign of a train. "Has there been a change in schedule?" they asked the station-master, who put a pinch of snuff in his nose, then offered them his snuff-box. "No," he said finally, adjusting his small red cap. "There's been no change, but the noon train comes in late, as a rule. The engineer likes to have his lunch in Felden. They make the best dumplings there, you know. And then he usually has a glass of beer or so at Schreins."

"And if a train is going in the opposite direction is there no danger of a collision?"

"There isn't any other train at this time, and, besides, the people are never in a hurry."

Toni and Father Forster looked at each other. There was nothing for them to do but be patient.

"You should be thinking of what you are going to play for the Bishop," the priest advised.

"How can I play for him when he is in prison?"

"He is to have a hearing this afternoon at the cathedral.

I trust we can be there before it starts. You will then be able not only to comfort the Bishop but also to soften the Emperor by your music."

"The Emperor!" Toni gasped. Then, quickly, he began to concentrate upon the problem. How was he going to win over the Emperor? "Suppose *you* had to play for His Majesty?" he said to Father Forster. "What would *you* play?"

In spite of his anxiety the priest smiled. "I am sure that you will know what to choose. Strangely enough, at times there is the plain common sense of the country-born written all over your face."

Toni reached for his aquiline nose and pursed his lips. As his thoughts raced on, he remembered for a second the driver who had brought him to Linz, two years ago. "Bruckner looks like a peasant until he hears his music, then . . ." Well, he certainly wished to appear like a creature from another world to His Majesty. He would not be afraid, for one thing. Even the Emperor himself was mortal and could make mistakes, as he had just done in the Bishop's case.

The train rolled in with exasperating slowness, and the two boarded it. It stopped at every little hamlet. Desperately, Toni fingered his rosary, while Father Forster read his breviary.

The cathedral looked as peaceful as ever with its two graceful spires pointing heavenward. They rattled the knocker of the Parish house, and the sexton opened the door. "Come this way, if you please," he said, looking almost pleasant. "It's certainly a relief to see you here."

As he followed the man to the Bishop's parlor, Toni could

feel the current of strange, anxious tension that now pervaded the atmosphere of hope and trust. When they reached the staircase, Toni ran on ahead of the others. Hurry, said a voice inside him, there isn't too much time. But at the landing he stopped. He was still in the vicinity of the church and of the Holy Eucharist. Even in his desperate eagerness to be of service, he could not neglect the outward appearance of respect. He walked the rest of the way slowly, and when he reached the door of the parlor, he knocked gently. The Bishop's voice answered, and he stepped quietly inside.

At the sight of him the Bishop smiled incredulously. "I never thought you'd be able to come here so soon."

Toni's throat was too choked for speech. The Bishop's voice stirred him probably as much as his music stirred the Bishop.

"Would you mind very much if we went over to the cathedral for a little while?" the Bishop asked the gentleman sitting across the table from him.

Toni's face lit up. This was not the Emperor, but a representative of His Majesty. An aristocrat, no doubt, with those sharp features and kind-looking blue eyes and that full beard, parted in the middle, in the Habsburg fashion.

"Go ahead," said the gentleman, "you and your young farmer friend, but don't pray too long. I must go back to Vienna."

"This is Herr Bruckner, our organist," the Bishop said, smiling. "I'm sorry that in my excitement over his arrival I forgot to introduce him. But you must hear him play."

"I'm glad to meet you, Herr Bruckner," the gentleman said. "I am Count Troller." But, as he shook Toni's hand, he looked at him doubtfully.

Toni realized that he would have not only to comfort the Bishop but also to soften the heart of this man. Somehow he felt that that would not be too difficult. The Count, lean and aristocratic, rose to accompany them. It was not only that his eyes seemed kind! There was a sort of charming weakness about his whole person. Perhaps the Emperor too was like him, kind and good and easily dominated by a liberal Parliament.

"Play something about the sun and the beauty of the earth," the Bishop requested on their way to the church. "When we come out of the darkness of prison we realize all that our eyes have been denied. In the light of the sun the world is bright and colorful even though at the moment it may be permeated with dark elements." Then he addressed the Count. "I too come from peasant stock," he said. "Perhaps that's why I am so loath to stay in any place that is hedged in by walls."

The Count looked at the Bishop with surprise. Apparently, he had not thought of him as a peasant, that sovereign figure with the purple vest and the big ring on his finger—the spiritual leader of Austria. "You shouldn't have been sent to prison at all," he said, his fair skin turning scarlet. "You were supposed to be held in house confinement until your trial. Prison is a place of punishment." And he tore at his graying beard.

"I shall make what may seem to be a strange statement,"

the Bishop said, just before entering the cathedral. "I'm almost glad this has happened to me. People in Austria are not really so irreligious as they have made themselves believe. Liberalism has no future in this country. I think the Austrians are still attached to the Church and to what she stands for, and this incident may shake them out of their lethargy."

The Count shrugged.

Seated before the organ, Toni looked for a second down into the church nave. The Bishop and the Count were kneeling side by side in a pew, and gazing up at the main altar. Toni pulled the *Flute* and the *Mezzo voce* stops and began to play. It seemed to him that the tones he called forth could touch men's hearts softly like angels' wings brushing against the clouds.

* * *

A half hour later Bruckner met the Bishop and the Count in the sacristy. He was completely unprepared for the effect of his playing on the Emperor's deputy. The Count's eyes were wet. He ran toward Toni, took him in his arms and kissed him. Toni turned rigid in the embrace of one so exalted and so noble. His tanned face turned white and he had not the least notion as to what he should say or do. At last the Count let go of him and, shaking his head wonderingly, followed the Bishop to his private apartment.

"Herr Bruckner!" The Bishop looked back and smiled. "I believe we are going to discuss the Holy Sacrament of Matrimony. Would you not be interested in hearing what I have to say? I hope you will give Herr Bruckner permission to listen to the hearing," he said, turning to the Count.

"Of course, of course," the Count said, somewhat taken aback. "I can't thank him enough for his performance." Then, in a lighter tone, "Are you thinking of marriage, Herr Bruckner?"

"Not right now, Sir," Toni stammered, blushing. "I haven't very much time, you see. I have to start writing my symphony."

"Never mind," the Bishop said. "It will still do Herr Bruckner good to listen. He takes various religious problems from the store of present day ideas and he solves them beautifully in his music."

So that was what he was doing! Toni flushed at the high praise.

Back in the drawing-room he sat in a corner, grateful to be able to step out of the lamplight. The Count without further ado opened the hearing.

"I think your religious fervor has caused you to make a great mistake," he told the Bishop, "and there is no point in your denying it. But you are, when all is said and done, a man like other men, and therefore prone to make mistakes once in a while." He smiled and his aristocratic fingers thoughtfully stroked his beard.

"I am sorry to have to contradict you," the Bishop said firmly. "I say again that the Church has not only the right but the duty to share in the supervision of education. I said so before and I shall not retract that statement."

The Count shook his head in dejection. "But you must admit that matrimony is the foundation of civilized society and it must therefore be governed by the civil authority."

"If the civil authority governs matrimony, so the Church

protects it." The Bishop leaned forward eagerly. "The institution of marriage comes from God. The blessing that flows from it comes from God. The Church regards marriage as the spiritual union between man and woman—the closest union, the strongest bond that exists—a bond dissoluble only by death. If you view marriage in the light of the spirit you must understand. It is a blending of life as a whole and the mutual exchange and sharing of personal values. The apostles say: Let the husband render the debt to the wife and the wife to the husband."

"Still you must admit that the Church's view of marriage is a very rigid one," protested the Count.

"It is written: 'What God has joined together let no man put asunder,' " the Bishop insisted.

"Oh, come now," the Count said smiling. He bit off the tip of a cigar and lit it slowly. Not looking at the Bishop he said, "There are ways to get around the Church's laws."

"The marriage bond is established by contract," the Bishop said quietly. "You know very well, of course, that any contract can become null and void under certain circumstances, but we don't have to go into that, that is purely a legal matter."

The Count exhaled pensively. "I agree with you on that point," he said slowly. "Then there is the matter of education. You understand, of course, that the State, for the best interest of the community, must insist that the children receive a certain kind and a certain amount of schooling."

"The Church understands this very well," the Bishop said. "Among all the blessings of marriage the child holds first place. But if the Church schools offer the required educa-

tion, why do you object to them? And why do you object to the Church's co-operation in the public school system? Is not religion a necessary element in education?"

He leaned back in his armchair and awaited an answer. When none was forthcoming, he said: "If it is, then you must admit that our logic is sound."

The Count rose and started to pace back and forth through the room. "Aren't you willing to meet us even halfway?" he asked.

"How can I?" the Bishop returned. "The laws you condemn as rigid I consider necessary to the peace, dignity and happiness of marriage. And as far as education is concerned, the Church cannot shirk her responsibilities. We must do our best to make the children members of the Church of Christ, so that the worship of Our Lord may daily increase. If you agree with our fundamental tenets, you can scarcely disapprove of our conclusions."

"I know that the Emperor would be glad to compromise."

"There are certain things on which it is death to compromise. There is only one truth. We cannot believe in only half the truth or follow only half of God's laws."

"You are stubborn," the Count said in an irritated voice.

The Bishop smiled. "We are not stubborn. There are many instances on which we would be only too glad to compromise, but we cannot do so where God's orders are concerned. 'You cannot obey two masters,' the Lord has said."

"The Emperor is young and pliant and it is difficult for him to say 'no.' "

"If he cannot say 'no' to Parliament, how is it that he can say 'no' to me, who am the representative of the Lord?"

"It is easy for you to talk," the Count said, "but it is hard for the Emperor to decide when the Pope says one thing and Parliament says another."

"His Majesty must remember that those who are not governed by God will soon be ruled by tyrants."

"The Pope is far away in Rome, but the Parliament is here in Vienna. His Majesty wishes to please everyone. *You* have to please only the faithful."

Again the Bishop smiled. "There you are wrong. The realm of the Church covers the whole world. Please, tell His Majesty that he must not be afraid of Parliament, because God will be with him if he has the courage to stand up for his convictions. 'Everyone who shall confess Me before men, I shall also confess him before My Father Who is in heaven,' Christ said, and also, 'If the world hates you, know you that they hated Me before you.' "

There was a deep silence and Toni assumed that the Count was arranging his thoughts for further argument, but he shook the Bishop's hand instead. "The Emperor is a good churchman," he said. "I don't want you to misunderstand him or his motives. His position seems none too secure; at least he does not feel it is. This is merely my assumption, of course. After all, there was a revolution only ten years ago, and the spirit of rebellion is not altogether dead, even now. Yet I understand your reasoning. If you believe that one thing is right you cannot do another."

Then he turned to Toni. "I truly wish that I could take you with me. You are a magician!"

Toni grew red, bowed stiffly and felt more awkward than ever, face to face with so much grace and elegance.

"Will it be so difficult to give His Majesty my answer?" the Bishop asked.

The Count shook his head. "In my opinion he already knew quite well what you were going to say. I cannot predict, of course, what his decision will be, but I do know that he would like very much to be on your side. You must not think that it will be easy for him to take a stand in your behalf."

Smilingly, the Bishop accompanied the Count to the door. "I think we are pretty much in the same position, His Majesty and I. We are both more constrained than other men to do the things we believe right. How can we govern others unless we govern ourselves?"

After the Count had left, Toni took his courage in both his hands. "Would it help if I went to Vienna and played for the Emperor?" he asked the Bishop.

The Bishop put his hands on Toni's shoulders. "You dear man! I know how much this offer costs you. I love you for it."

"You told me once that I must put my candle in a candlestick that it may shine for all."

"I know I did, and I do think it's time for you to go out into the world. But it won't be necessary to sway the Emperor. There is an inner voice that he cannot ignore in his soul. I don't think he will ever really forsake the Church."

The Bishop pulled Toni down on a chair beside him. "Yet I think it's time for you to become an apostle. Remember that Christ said, 'As My Father has sent Me, so I send you'."

"And you think that I am ready?"

"You have fought all the battles against yourself, and it seems that you have won them."

"When shall I go?"

The Bishop rose. "When the time comes."

"I shall be waiting," Toni said, and bowed his head to the Bishop's blessing.

II.

4.

Out into the world! Toni smiled as he walked through the echoing corridors, trying to make his clumsy feet tread lightly. When he stepped into the street, and the dazzling sun hit his eyes, he blinked a little, leaned back against the cathedral wall and breathed deeply. He was happy. He had never felt so good in all his life. He was a well man again—healthy, able to work. He had thanked the Lord for his recovery in a symphonic mass. In his *Benedictus* he had knelt before God and expressed his thanksgiving. Now he was free and could go on his way. Out into the world!

A new, exciting music swirled about him as he walked along. He listened to the clear, transparent stream that seemed to flood over a bottom of wood and silver and brass. Orchestra music! The soprano of the violins tried to rise above the steady murmur of the violas. A flute melody flowed along with the current, then a bass voice shot up in an angular motif. For a second it broke through, then it fell back into the stream and its echo seemed to float along with the rest of the music. Now, distinctly, sounded a new theme,

a melody never heard before. Stubborn and obstinate, it pushed against all resistance, driving all other voices to the bottom. In sixths and octaves it jumped, carefree and inconsiderate, as a young goat skips on an Alpine meadow. And beneath it the stream of music stretched away across flutes, light as driftwood, harps, delicately curved like aerial roots, and brown slender violas.

Toni would have liked to fling himself into this melodious stream and swim along with the current. He had been inactive long enough. Now things were different. Angry syncopes protested against all retardations and, following the main theme, rushed wildly over all impediments and proceeded on their own.

Unconsciously, Toni approached the street where Lois Bogner was boarding since she had come to Linz to take courses. Dreamily he walked along. The music was faint now and far away, in the spheres somewhere beyond a stretch of blue hills. He did not have to force his mind to remember the melodies. He knew they were there and he was aware of the fact that an unusual effort was required to reach and hold them.

He took up his station across the street from the small house where Lois lived. A statue of St. Joseph stood above the entrance door. It was a beautiful afternoon. Several persons, walking by, seemed to smile at him encouragingly, as though they all knew that he was waiting for a girl. Lois was so pretty. Her cheeks and her lips reminded him of delicate roses and her voice, sweet and low, was like the rustling in the woods.

Less than an hour later she came out. She was wearing a

dirndl dress that looked as though she had been standing beneath a cherry tree when the wind was scattering its blossoms. She started to walk briskly down the street. He caught up with her when she stopped before a jeweler's and looked into the shop-window.

"Is there anything you would like?" Toni asked, timidly touching her elbow. He could give her presents now and it made him happy. He needed so little money for himself and his family no longer required his help.

The girl flushed, speechless in her struggle between embarrassment and delight.

Her shyness gave Toni courage. "Does that ring over there strike your fancy?" he asked, pointing at a sparkling diamond.

She shook her fair head. "I like that little watch," she told him. "See, that one with the black velvet band. I look at it every day and I'm always so glad when it is still there."

"Oh, but then you must have it," he said and, taking her hand, he started to draw her toward the entrance.

But the girl did not move. "I haven't the money, Herr Bruckner," she said. "And it's just as well. I don't have to have a watch. It's the same with flowers, isn't it? They are nicer in the garden with all the other pretty plants than in a bowl in one's room. Aren't they?"

Lois could say such lovely things, but Toni knew she was just trying to console herself over the fact that she could not have her wish. "Why not look at it more closely?" he asked her, and with a courage entirely new to him he piloted her into the store. And when he saw her rosy fingers

gingerly handling the small round gold watch, he felt he had to buy it for her. He could not help himself. He hadn't enough money with him, not nearly enough, but the storekeeper knew him and allowed Lois to take the watch with her, even though it had not been paid for. He did not want to disappoint the 'Fräulein Braut.'

'Bride.' He had called her Toni's bride and the girl, though flushing so hotly that tears came into her eyes, had accepted the statement without opposition. Toni felt dizzy as he walked with her out into the street. "But Herr Bruckner," she stammered. "But really, Herr Bruckner, you shouldn't have done it! Oh, but Herr Bruckner!"

He wanted so much to take her into his arms, but this was not the right time. He would first have to speak to her parents. And it was much better not to rush things. He had waited so long for this happy moment that he could wait a little longer and let the girl become used to him and to the thought of becoming his wife.

Neither of them spoke a word on the way to her singing class, but this silence between them, filled with soft music, was beautiful. Toni was in a daze of happiness and, apparently, she felt the same way.

Around them, however, there was a great clatter and din with everyone going home from work. The creak of turning wheels and the shrill bells of the horsecars were heard on all sides and suddenly Toni heard these noises magnified into the nerve-shattering intolerable tenseness of a big city. It would be difficult for him to live in the midst of restlessness, and he wondered how Lois felt about it. He thought of the

quiet routine of her life. The evening walks around the fountain in the square in front of the church; groups of girls and groups of boys casting quick, investigating glances toward one another; going to church on Sundays, past booths displaying bright goods and shining tools; dances on a wooden platform in the backgardens of little country inns.

"Do you think you could live in the city?" he asked her timidly.

For a while the confused murmur of the midday voices was the only sound, then her laughter seemed to reverberate from the surrounding houses as though mocking him, and he grew a little sad.

"Could you?" he asked again.

"What difference does it make?" she answered lightly, "when I already know that I'm going to end up in St. Florian?"

Toni took this as more than a mere hint that the city would attract her, and grew hopeful again. He caught a glimpse of his face mirrored in a shop-window. He did not look too bad. His farmer's figure, strongly built, was not without a certain grace, like a well-made instrument, sturdily constructed yet delicately finished. He smiled. It was Lois' beauty whose glory threw a faint reflection even upon so humble a man as himself. He lifted his hand and gazed thoughtfully at it. The girl noticed the movement and smiled.

"You have nice hands," she said. "Big, but shaped as finely as a woman's."

He was too happy to reply. Later, alone, he looked with

new interest at the hurrying people around him. There was an air of cunning and avarice about them which would be accentuated in a big city. But, thank God, the music had returned. A soft wind-tune prevailed over the noises around him, and a sweet lyric theme redeemed the greedy faces and made each one of them into the face of a lover.

Toni reached a furniture store and with quick resolution opened the door and walked in. Herr Bogner could never give Lois a dowry. With his numerous children, he had worries enough on his hands. And happiness too, of course, plenty of happiness. But happiness would not buy furniture for Lois, so it was up to Toni to get what she would need. He wished he knew more about her tastes. He imagined her blond beauty and tried to give it a matching background.

"Light wood," he said to the salesman, "and smooth, so that it's easy to take care of."

The salesman said he thought he had just what Toni wanted, and, after some time, he was able to satisfy his customer's somewhat exacting demands.

As Toni walked home, the melodious allegro that still hummed in his subconscious mind had to struggle against a new theme which had attacked it brutally. A trumpet call was followed by horn cadences, then the high string instruments became excited like a storm in the treetops. Toni marched up the stairs to his room. A powerful unison, a real organ-pedal motif marched with him. Quos ego! Here I am. For the first time in his life Toni seemed to know where he was going and what he wanted.

He inspected the disorder in his room. Some of his old

affection led him when he arranged the note-books in piles as they had been before the violent scene with Barbara. They were his load, his burden. Like a mountaineer with his heavy knapsack on his back, he too would have to carry this weight during his imminent climb.

He sat down on the piano stool, and tried to recall the music of the afternoon. When he listened intently, he heard nothing, but when he relaxed, he perceived faint, barely audible murmurs, and then, far, far away a hint of a new type of music. The old rules were like a weighty harness on his back. He tried to proceed in whole steps, in the diatonic form he had been taught, but it wouldn't work—it was rigid, entirely too rigid. And the goal was so alluring. Daringly, he tried a few half-steps, carefully, as one eases the weight of a burden by leaning forward. Then, to lighten some of the load, he slipped even further out of the harness and tried another half-step here and still another there. Now he was independent, ready for his own creativeness, which somehow seemed slow in making itself felt. He called out his protest against all opposing forces: "Quos ego!" in wild chromatics, raging against compulsion, stubbornly claiming his independence: "Quos ego! Here I am!"

* * *

One morning, a few days later, Toni sat in his room thinking that he might as well live in a warehouse. Some of the furniture he had ordered had arrived and stood around him, half unpacked, with wood-shavings escaping to the floor from the wrappings. Helplessly, Toni looked about him.

There was no use hurrying the girl. The next move had to come from her. She loved him, no doubt; otherwise would she have accepted the watch? "You have nice hands," he whispered to himself, "big, but shaped like a woman's." Toni laughed foolishly with happiness. Then new doubts assailed him and he attempted to destroy them. The watchmaker had called Lois Toni's bride and she had not protested. Surely she loved him; he ought to know. He had known this girl since her birth, and to him she was as clear as crystal.

Nevertheless, Toni wished she were here already, arranging the furniture, making things look bright and neat as only a woman can, putting an arm around his neck. He was longing for love, for tenderness, but, at the moment, would have been happy to receive a little kindness or friendship. Perhaps if he sent for Nanny, his sister. Of all his family, since his mother's death, Nanny had been the one closest to him. But if she came, she would want to stay, and when he got married, things might not work out. He wished he had a friend. Not one of high status like the Herr Prelate, or even the Bishop who wished him so well. Just a simple man like himself, with whom he could chat and laugh, and to whom he could talk of his girl. A fleeting picture of Franz, the lanky youngster, with whom he had played in the Rocka Roas and studied in Windhaag, was before his eyes. How lucky Toni had been in those days when he had felt so sorry for himself. Toni was still thinking of the past when, suddenly, the door opened and, to his great amazement, Franz himself came in.

Either Toni had never looked at his young friend closely

enough or Franz had changed. He seemed to tower so high above him and his features had acquired such a prophet-like quality that Toni scarcely dared put his arms around him. But he did so finally. He had to. He loved him very much.

Hugging Toni and joyfully pummeling him on the back, Franz told him of his rapid success. Toni had forgotten that Franz was a Sunday child, born to luck. Of course, he could take two steps or even three while Toni took one. He had been conductor at the Piarist Church in the eighth district in Vienna, then Professor at the Conservatory, later conductor in the Hofburg chapel and now he was the director of the symphony orchestra of the Society of the Friends of Music. "You must come with me, Toni," he said. "You know that Sechter, your old teacher, is dead, and his place at the Conservatory is available. Sechter himself in his testament requested that it be offered to you. You must come with me!"

Then he spoke of life in Vienna, and told Toni how the city walls had been torn down to make way for new buildings and still more new buildings and centers of culture, and how imperial ambition had helped to create a new metropolis. He described the beauty of the Künstlerhaus and the new Conservatory, which was almost like a palace. With his powerful Christ-like head, his mass of black curls, his burning eyes, he looked as though he were permanently carrying a banner. To the slow-moving Toni, the sight of him was sheer delight.

"You must come with me. You are needed," Franz assured him. He spoke of the superficial qualities of the intellectuals

in Vienna, their petty vindictiveness, their immorality; of the party cliques, and the "Stammtisch" friends who made the rules for the game you were supposed to play if you wanted to get someone somewhere. "Ultra-modern in their moral ways, they hold on tightly to their formal traditions where art is concerned. They put up hurdles for us artists wherever they can," he said with a snort of honest rage. "Imagine! We have just one orchestra in the whole town of Vienna! And just try to put a Romantic composer on your program and see what happens!" Excitedly, he made a step back and ran into a wrapped piece of furniture. "And what's happening here?" he asked with a grin. "Are you moving?"

At last Toni could pour out his heart and tell everything to a friend. He described Lois, her young beauty, her softness, her pretty voice. He told Franz how, before his illness, he had been attracted by every girl, but that now he knew that in each one of them he had been seeking Lois and Lois alone. He was in love with her and there was nothing he could do about it.

Franz laughed good-naturedly. "Still your buying all this furniture seems a bit hasty to me."

"If Lois won't have me, I shall never marry," Toni said solemnly. "Nanny can have the furniture then. I don't care."

Franz had taken a holiday and planned to spend the rest of the day with Toni. "Where can we go?" he asked. "Linz looks hot and dusty to me, and not much of a change from Vienna."

"Let's drive out to the country then," Toni suggested. "I can ask someone to play the Benediction for me."

It was Franz who suggested going to St. Florian. On the way there Toni did not utter a word. He knew that he wanted to play for Franz the music he had composed the day he had been with Lois, and that it would demand all he possessed in the way of skill and strength.

In the choir loft of St. Florian's the new organist greeted them modestly, as though he felt that this domain was still Toni's sacred precinct and he but an intruder there. Humbly, Toni asked his successor for permission to play. After the brilliance of the landscape in the hot afternoon sun, the church interior seemed dim. But Toni's eyes could behold something that was not visible to the others, something of his own, something still secret. . . . For a moment he was frightened. Then he reasoned silently: I'm not all alone. Richard Wagner for one has climbed the path before me, and there will be others after me. He steeled himself with his faith and began for the greater glory of God. Nothing could go wrong now.

This is my first symphony, he thought. The real difficulty is to find the true balance of soul, the peace of God. I'll work it out in my music. And, imitating the timbre of the violins, he began to reveal the picture of his tormented soul. Quos ego. Hidden passion, broken free, shivered through every tone. Only the nights knew about the storm in his heart, hence the slow moaning motif of deep longing, then, briefly, but hotly, the desire for the treasures of this world. A choral theme led him back to the Church's ways. With a short transition, similar to a monologue and purifying his heart, Toni proceeded to a Scherzo. Now a sweet spring theme contrasted with a wild storm motif, delicate viola staccati competing

with mysterious horn voices. Then a passionate Finale expressed again what the first movement had implied. Violent protest! Stubborn revolt! A rending of chains!

He had never yet conceived so big a composition. His hands were shaking. The excitement had been too much. He felt vaguely that he had to sit still a while longer. From down in the aisle Prelate Mayr sent a wondering glance to the choir loft. Quickly Toni rose. The Herr Prelate must not be kept waiting.

Sitting together in Toni's old room, looking out through the tall window over the wide, fruitful land, they discussed this turning point in Toni's art.

"I'm not a musical man as Arneth was," Prelate Mayr said, pouring out three glasses of prickling Austrian wine, "but to-day Herr Bruckner's music seemed to bring pictures before my eyes. I saw our landscape here through the trees of our park: the rich fields, the waving grass blades. It was as though I were lying somewhere on the ground with my hands beneath my head, as I used to when I was a little boy, looking up at the sky and wishing to be there."

"I wasn't thinking of anything like that," Toni said, embarrassed that he had to contradict the Herr Prelate.

"He'll write compositions about the country, and plenty of them," Franz said, his prophet's eyes shining, "once he's in the city, Herr Prelate, and sees the sun slant thinly between the roofs."

Prelate Mayr looked startled. "But I distinctly saw the peasants dancing around their May tree. Didn't you feel any of this?"

Toni shook his head. He had no words to express what he

had felt. To him music was music, as clearly as God was God or man was man. There was nothing figurative about it. He sensed more than he knew that if dancing peasants had been seen in his music they were only part of the whole, a *part* swinging in cosmic rhythm.

"That music needs instrumentation," Franz said—"the tone colors of wood and wind with all their contrasts. If you'll write it down, I promise you that my orchestra will play it."

Toni grasped Franz's hand and pressed it hard. His throat was too tight for words.

"I must be going now," the Prelate said, "but I hope you two will stay until evening. We are having a big wedding in the village. Our pharmacist and the oldest Bogner girl are getting married."

When he had gone, Franz walked over to the window. "You know," he said, looking down into the park and away from Toni who sat with his face in his hands. "I think you played your own decision. You let the organ make up your mind for you." He turned back to the room. "What is the matter? Don't you feel well?" Quickly he crossed the room and knelt down beside Toni.

"I'm all right," Toni said. "It's just that the girl who's getting married to-day is the one I love."

"Toni, oh Toni," Franz said. His arms went around his friend and he held him tight.

A motif split the dark clouds like a brilliant shaft of sunlight, plunging the world into a sea of shimmering gold. It flashed up and down before Toni's bewildered eyes,

tantalizing him with the message it bore. It eluded his grasp through the fine violin strings and joyously mounted into the eternity of space. When it returned in the voice of a single oboe, it brought peace in its warm flow.

Franz looked searchingly into Toni's face. "Don't take this disappointment so hard," he said. "Look at it this way: if the girl had married you, you might have stayed here and never done what you are meant to do. Toni, oh Toni, don't you know that there is a domain where only faith can take us, when vision fails and reason refuses to accept. But faith? How many have faith? You have been blessed by the Holy Ghost; you, as a true child of God, can be a guide to the Supreme Mysteries."

It was a different Toni now from the one who had challenged the Archbishop with his impatient question: 'When can I go out into the world? I am waiting.' With his head against Franz's breast, his eyes flooded with the tears he could not hold back, he murmured: "I'm coming, and may God help me!"

PART THREE

Allegro Agitato

Part Three

ALLEGRO AGITATO

Theme: . . . and that which you hear in the ear,
preach ye upon the housetops.

III.

1.

Toni was walking from his home in the eighteenth district to the Conservatory of Music. By so doing he would be able to save a few kreutzer to buy a little present as a surprise for his sister, Nanny, who was keeping house for him. He also enjoyed the exercise which gave him a sense of physical well-being, but most of all he wanted to fill his eyes with the beauty of the city. Vienna had already bound him in the spell of her own particular charm. He loved her Gothic spires and her verdant parks and her broad-spanned bridges beneath which the Danube flowed swirlingly as though tiny undercurrents stirred constantly to the swaying music which had made Vienna known as the city of the waltz.

Swinging his shabby black bag containing his pupils' homework, Toni walked through the brown entrance door

of the Conservatory. A little stucco angel in the hall, its round, dimpled cheeks permanently inflated, seemed to blow him a kiss. Inside, it was cool and dim, in contrast to the hot streets filled with the sun's glare. The strangeness of finding himself a teacher in such an important institution, and of being looked up to by his little group of pupils, still gave Toni a thrill. One of his students, a talented youngster, was even writing his biography. The thought of this honor brought a happy smile to Toni's face. He remembered one passage in particular in which he was described as sitting like a powerful peasant-apostle at the table, surrounded by his awestruck followers, a survivor of long-bygone days, yet an ultra-modern, an explorer, in the field of music.

How different love and friendship are, he thought. Love, unlike friendship, cannot be easily reciprocated. This strange growth of bliss and misery flowers in your heart, independently of the heart for which it is intended. Friendship, on the other hand, you can win. The more you offer in friendship, the more you receive. Friendship is like an echo. And his friendship with his talented students made Toni proud and very happy. A good tree bears good fruit. He chuckled.

With unhurried steps he walked through the long corridors, listening, with a smile on his lips, to the medley of music that came through the closed doors. He turned to the right and entered the teachers' room. As he passed a group of chatting colleagues, one of them turned around and caught his eye. "Why, Bruckner," he said with a good-natured grin, "look at yourself! You seem to have some decent clothes hanging from your muscles for a change."

"Why, yes, I did buy myself a new suit," Toni said blushing and twisting a button on the front of his coat.

The director of the Conservatory gave him an appreciative glance, then whispered in his ear: "If you would only decide to throw your symphonies on a dunghill and write a few good piano scores instead. You could live far more comfortably."

Toni stood gazing at the other man in surprise. "But how could I ever do that?" he asked candidly. "I believe in my music." Then, hesitatingly, he added: "And I must compose." He turned away and left the room abruptly.

Meanwhile his students had gathered for his lecture. He felt that he had never needed their confidence, their worship quite so much as now. "Good morning, my boys," he said. "My dear, dear boys," he added silently. He sat down, smoothed his short hair, made the sign of the cross on his forehead and said happily: "Pro majorem Dei Gloriam. Let us get to work. We have a lot to do."

Beside him young Gollinger was busy writing in his notebook: 'His chin protruded stubbornly, his nose jutted challengingly, when he entered, as though he were thinking: I must succeed. Note by note, drop by drop, my music shall enter people's senses and nerves until they will say with me: Te Dominum laudamus.'

"I am returning your homework to you," Toni said, "but I should like you to play your compositions for me and I shall correct them first at the piano." Dalcor, a young Czechoslovakian, sat down on the piano stool.

"Not bad, not bad at all," Toni muttered, but soon

stopped the young man whose hands had been fluttering over the keyboard as though they were dancing. "Try to let this last seventh chord be dissolved by a new voice. Think of it as a landowner whose work is being done for him by his tenant-farmer."

The student laughed, even the muscles of his face moving gracefully. Toni looked at him tenderly. A dancer, a born dancer! He could make a ballet out of a funeral march! Toni loved him for being so true to his own talent. "But good heaven! Here you have consecutive fifths! Don't you know it's a crime to write them?"

"We all know," Schaller, a dark young man, answered, stroking his beard. "But there's one composer who writes those open fifths very consistently."

"Would his name be Anton Bruckner by any chance?" Toni asked, grinning. "And if so, how is it that you found out about it?"

"I borrowed parts of your score last week," Schaller said in a loud, self-assured voice. "What scribbled pages! How often you must have worked over them, correcting, rewriting, revising. Knowing the neatness of your finished work, I copied the pages over for you. Kisch here helped me with it."

Toni rubbed his nose. He didn't quite know whether he should praise or blame these boys. "That was a very nice idea, very nice, indeed," he finally said, "but suppose I had needed the score? Suppose I had looked for it and had not been able to find it?"

Schaller and Kisch looked at each other and smiled. "We knew you wouldn't look for it. It was quite obvious that

you were engaged in composing something new. You had that faraway look, yesterday, and it was almost impossible to attract your attention."

"Oh, is that so?" Toni smiled, pleased with their understanding. "But to get back to these consecutive fifths; I don't want you to write them. I want you to study the rules and to follow them closely until you have mastered them. You know, boys, when you walk out in the woods, you may see a mighty tree and, as the wind blows through its thick foliage, you may hear a song." He shrugged lightly. "But it's from the roots that these leaves receive their nourishment, don't you see?" He looked amused at their puzzled faces. "Even the new branch will soon draw juices from the trunk to which it is grafted." He could talk like this freely to these students who worshipped him.

"Your new symphony is beautiful. I think it's the best one you have composed so far," Kisch said. "I wish I could conduct it; in fact I feel sure that some day I will." He shuffled his feet and swung his pencil through the air like a baton.

"It is romantic and dreamy," Schaller went on. "There is in it a yearning for the countryside of one who, forced to live in the city, thinks of the country with reverence. It has an innocent beauty as though the voices of nature were listening to themselves on a Sunday morning when no human being intrudes on their privacy."

"There you go again, interpreting, binding in some form or other what has been freed from bondage," Toni said, shaking his head in mild disapproval.

"I don't understand you at all now," said Horst, another

of Toni's gifted students, and he dug his hand into his coat pocket and produced a crumpled note-book.

"I think I know what Herr Bruckner means," said Low, a reedy youngster with a mop of blond hair. Toni listened with interest, knowing this young man to be slower to accept his strange harmonies than the others. "Don't you see how it is?" Low went on. "The creative soul has burst the bonds of strict rules. And what happens? Instead of allowing it to glory in its free flight we capture it again and clip its wings with our abstract or contemplative ideas."

"But isn't music intended to express human emotions? Human actions and character conflicts?" the younger Schaller asked timidly. His dark eyes shone moistly behind his spectacles.

"It may seem that Herr Bruckner's music has a program," Dalcor said in his musical Bohemian accent. "Not a dramatic but an ethical program. Yet, his music is purest music, depicting sound, not sound-pictures." His long fluttering fingers took a piece of chalk from a small tray in the middle of the table and crumbled it to a little heap of white dust. "It is true, for instance, that the wind instruments *sigh*. Here!" he leaned over and picked up a sheet of note paper, covered with Bruckner's clear neat musical signs, and pointed out the place with a sensitive forefinger. "But they sigh the last measure of the original theme. Isn't that so, Herr Bruckner?"

"Yes, it is," they all agreed, looking at Toni for more information, as though information were needed, as though the whole movement were not permeated with the structure of the theme—its beginning thunder, its syncopic ascent, its

retardation. Even through the basses the motif marched, clear and distinct, and unwed to other voices.

"I don't like taking so much time from the class work for the analysis of my own compositions, but I'll prove to you that you all love not my music but your own interpretation of it." He looked at them one by one, his smile blotting out his criticism. "Nothing but misconceptions!" he added.

"No misconception on my part possible!" The older Schaller jumped to his feet. One lock of his black hair fell over his forehead like a bold exclamation mark.

"Will you allow each of us to give his impressions?" Low asked and Toni nodded.

"In the first movement I could discern the purifying power of nature upon man," the younger Schaller said. "A hunting motif and a gay peasant dance in the second movement." He half-closed his eyes. "I could almost see the edelweiss on the boys' hats, the gentian on the girls' corselets. There was joy and even ecstasy in the scherzo theme, followed by a sudden change. I could sense the composer's struggle to be free of all the forces of nature, of all its temptations, to conquer the pagan in his soul and to lose himself completely in the God-idea."

"How can you say that?" Kisch protested. "The finale was much too gloomy to evoke the idea of God."

Toni said nothing. He looked at them and the love in his face had a touch of sorrow. "What about you?" he asked a sturdy fellow who looked more like a man of affairs than a musician.

"I don't know," the boy said. His hard fists opened and

closed nervously as he looked around at his fellow-students, as though he were not quite their equal.

Toni recognized the feeling as one he himself had never entirely conquered—an inheritance from his childhood in the country. "Your judgment, Stadler, may be the soundest of all," he said gently.

The boy stood up. Toni noticed his excellent build, the wide shoulders, the narrow waist, the soldierly bearing. "I have no judgment," the boy said as if in sudden anger over his sense of inferiority. "But if you'll sell me the theme of your third movement, I'll make a military march out of it which will bring in enough money to cover the costs of rehearsing your next concert. How about it?"

Kisch, sitting beside him, pulled at his coat, but Stadler pushed him away. Several outraged voices were raised after Stadler's challenging question, but Bruckner smiled in self-mockery. "Don't you boys ride your high horse too much. Who knows what we'll have to do to finance the performance of my symphonies. And, as for the march theme, my young friend," he turned to Stadler, "the idea is not bad and perhaps I could find a more adequate motif for the scherzo." His students glanced at him, not quite understanding.

"If you will allow me to get back to your symphonies," Gollinger said, opening his notebook. "Biographically, I noticed a certain development. In the first symphony you are rebellious, trying to shed your harness; in the second you seem to creep back between the shafts, as though frightened by what you have dared to utter. In the third you feel your strength and proudly proclaim your faith. In the fourth you

dream, the dream of the lonely, longing for home wherever it may be."

Toni patted him on the shoulder and Gollinger, looking up, asked him: "I wonder whether I'm right in assuming that in your next work you'll turn away completely from all worldliness, that you will become contemplative and start to lay the foundation for the cathedral you will raise to the Lord."

Toni's face was tense with emotion. "Let's wait and see," he advised. Then, in a joking mood, he proceeded to analyze his own fourth symphony. "Imagine a German city in the Middle Ages," he began in a narrative tone. "Dawn is breaking. Soldiers sound the reveille from the city walls. The gates swing open. Knights on horseback proudly ride out into the world. Nature's spell enfolds them. They hear the rustling of the woods, and the singing of the birds. All morning they hunt, then they assemble on a light-green meadow or in a clearing. Dance-music is played while they enjoy their meal." He broke off abruptly and looked at the fascinated young faces before him. "That will be the last nonsense spoken to-day," he said soberly. "Now Kisch, my boy, play us your sonata, but, before you begin, let me tell you that it contains the very fundamentals I have been trying to teach you all for the past month."

"Really?" Kisch asked, flushing happily.

When Kisch had finished playing, Toni once again addressed Dalcor. "I'm afraid I didn't tell you before that your theme was excellently constructed and the whole composition brilliantly carried through. Full of errors." He

twinkled, then became serious again. "I won't say they don't matter, because they do. If you'll come to my house sometime this week I'll tell you why."

"Dalcor's composition was really good, wasn't it?" Stadler asked, while Dalcor almost danced toward the piano.

"In my opinion the theme you gave us was meant for a ballet," Dalcor said. "It was a charming motif—a little old-fashioned . . ."

"Charming! Old-fashioned!" Schaller cried. "I turned it into a finale that would tear your heart out."

"It struck me as a lyric theme and I made it into a song," Low said.

There was a stir as the young American, Billy Merle, and Wahler, Toni's star pupil, entered together. Toni, without turning around, waved to the two empty seats at the end of the long table. They had lost enough time in talk—not quite useless talk, but still just words. He meant to start with the analysis of the fugue to-day.

"What's the matter? What's happened?" the students called in a chorus toward the late-comers one of whom made a noise as though he were slapping the air with a notebook.

"What's the matter!" Toni exclaimed. "What do you think is the matter? They're late as usual. That's all." He was immediately sorry for his sarcasm because he had a special admiration for these two young men. One had come all the way from America, because he thought they had better music in Austria, and the other—well, Toni recognized a genius if he saw one.

"Come here, young gentlemen," he began in a quiet voice,

then, facing them, he stopped. "What on earth *has* happened?"

The American shrugged his shoulders and sat down nonchalantly. Another thing Toni liked about him was his clothes which were just as baggy as his own and probably just as comfortable. "Where did you get your black eye?" Toni wanted to know.

"I certainly didn't come to Vienna to fight *your* battles," the American said, "but this imbecile," he pointed toward Wahler, "was engaged in trying to lick far too many at once. I had to step in and help him. I poked one of his opponents on the chin, and, in turn, he broke my new glasses." Gingerly he fingered his black and swollen eye.

"But why did you pick a fight?" Toni turned toward Wahler. "That's so unlike you."

"But it'll be true to form from now on," Wahler said ominously, putting out his lower lip.

The American shrugged once more. "Wahler was in the wrong too," he said. "I have told him before that I believe in the freedom of the press. After all, the newspapers are read to-day and forgotten to-morrow and they end up in the gutter where they belong. One shouldn't be afraid of the press."

"But I'd really prefer it, if you told me exactly what occurred," Toni said. "And Merle, by the way, be sure and put a cold compress on that eye of yours. Buy a boric acid solution on your way home, will you?"

Wahler pulled nervously at his bow tie, which he released so suddenly that the elastic ribbon snapped. He was obvi-

ously very angry. The students seemed impatient and upset. Dalcor crumbled another piece of chalk into dust, and the two Schallers coughed nervously.

"Well, if Wahler is afraid to speak, I don't see why I shouldn't tell you," Billy Merle said. "Herr Bruckner was attacked to-day in the newspaper."

A murmur of surprise ran through the classroom at what everybody thought was such unnecessary excitement. Why, Herr Bruckner was attacked by the press every day!

"This is quite different," Wahler said, his face serious. He handed a newspaper to Toni. It was dirty and torn. Evidently it too had been mistreated in the battle. A column was marked with a red pencil. Toni began to read:

"One of the students of St. Anna's Music School has informed us that the new teacher, Anton Bruckner, insulted one of the girls by calling her a vulgar name, and repeatedly annoyed some of the young ladies with his caresses.

"This complaint is particularly noteworthy, because the composer has the reputation of being interested in nothing but his dissonant harmonies and—his prayer book. This revelation will come as a severe shock to some of his followers. As a matter of fact only the Young Wagnerian Club has admitted this obscure farmer's son to its adolescent heaven of worship. To the mature mind it is obvious that the ear-pounding intervals that Anton Bruckner has brought before the public have the sole effect of getting on people's nerves. But not even his worst enemies have suspected him of tasteless sex-digression or coarse offenses beyond the musical outlet. These incidents at St. Anna's will be further investigated."

As he read this, Toni drew his coat sleeve slowly over his mouth as if to muffle a groan of despair. He was glad his mother was no longer alive to experience his shame. Why did this have to happen to him who had always tried to lead a good life? What would his protector, the kind Bishop Rudigier say if he heard of this terrible and unfounded accusation? The suggestion that these young men before him who were so close to an understanding of his music, so eager to receive the spiritual benefit he had tried to give them, might fall away from him, was particularly grievous. He had wanted to give them the best of himself. He had meant to pour out his heart and his talent for them. He, who had received so much, had hoped to radiate some of the good fathers' love and piety; he had hoped that their gentle influence might touch the people around him and change them, making them more pleasant in the sight of the Lord. And because he had no words with which to render the beauty of the spiritual education he had received, he had strived to express it in his music. He did not have to be very clever to realize that the newspaper article would destroy all his plans by undermining his good reputation and by strengthening opposition to the Church.

He pushed the paper away from him and toward his students. Tears stood in his eyes.

Stadler skimmed over the article, then jumped up. He never seemed to be able to speak unless he stood at attention. "We must do something about this! It's not enough to sit here and say it's terrible!"

"Whatever we do, we have to be very careful about it. This is more than a piquant scandal to thrill the public,"

Kisch said frowning. "It is a charge of corruption delivered just at the psychological moment when Herr Bruckner was on the point of presenting his Third Symphony."

"Who wrote this mad tirade?" The fist with which the older Schaller was pounding the table trembled a little.

"Could it have been Hecht?" Dalcor asked.

Toni shook his head. "Hecht is sharp, even cruel, but not unfair."

"It was certainly written by someone who meant to derive some profit from it. Perhaps because he thought—erroneously—that Hecht might be pleased by it," Low said, his sensitive face screwed up as though in pain.

"Is there any truth whatsoever at the bottom of this?" Billy Merle asked.

The students started to protest loudly and all together. Little by little, however, their expressions of outrage became milder and milder until finally they were all speaking in undertones, as though no longer quite sure. Then, realizing that they themselves really wanted to know whether there was any justification for the ugly accusations, they became embarrassed and looked at Toni apologetically.

Toni sat at the head of the table, and looked straight into their eyes. He had nothing to conceal. "At St. Anna's, music is obligatory and some of the students are hopeless. There's a young girl there who is especially lacking in talent. Her compositions are mere chaos—each measure goes its own way, each chord is unrelated to the next. What makes things worse is the fact that she is trying to make up for incompetence by diligence. A measure containing one whole or two half notes or even four fourths has never yet occurred in her

work. Her pages are filled with a sea of black note heads that makes you dizzy before you even attempt to dive into it. The hopelessness of her efforts and her gay acceptance of the situation roused my sense of humor. I remember putting an arm about her shoulder and saying: "You little 'Urschl,' why don't you stay at home and cook macaroni?" And she answered, almost bursting with laughter, "Herr Bruckner, have you any idea how badly I cook macaroni?"

There were a few half-hearted laughs, then the American tried to repeat the typical Viennese word: "Urschl?" he asked, "what does that mean? Is it a vulgar word?"

"You may call it that if you wish," the younger Schaller said, "but it's certainly the mildest in our language. It has a friendly familiar sound." He turned to Toni. "This girl certainly did not denounce you. From what you have just told us, she seems rather nice."

"Are you in love with one of your students at St. Anna's?" Dalcor asked; then, reddening, he quickly apologized. "Please, don't answer, Sir. I had no right to ask you that."

Toni's face grew softer. "I'm not in love with any one girl," he told them. "But in a way I'm in love with all of them. They are so young, so innocent, so full of big plans, so optimistic, so ready to dream, so receptive. They all have blue eyes and blonde hair like sisters. I was always partial to blue eyes; they somehow look happier, purer." Suddenly Toni visualized the hard lines and cold blue eyes of the narrow pedantic face of his Windhaag superior, who out of his analytical brain, out of ambition and pride, lived only to criticize, and whose criticism was so deadly.

Toni's face always easy to read, must have shown the

sudden change of his feelings and his students apparently misinterpreted it. With a dull ache in his heart he saw the confidence in their faces fade and a troubled expression take its place, and, for the first time, he saw doubt written in their eyes. He leaned back in his chair and waited. He wanted them to say how much they believed in him. He wanted them to tell him that they would insist that these infamous lies about him be publicly retracted.

"Do you know anybody who could bring pressure to bear upon the man who wrote this article?" the American asked.

"Do you mean someone who is willing to play the game the other way around—to use unfair means to get what *we* want—or do you mean someone who believes in my innocence?" Toni asked rather sharply.

"Sometimes it doesn't make much difference whether you are innocent or not," Billy Merle said. "When all the odds are against you, you have to compromise. Not in the essentials, of course."

"Is honor a non-essential?" Toni asked him. "Shall I admit to a misdemeanor of which I am not guilty?"

"Certainly not," the American answered, "but some people's opinions or their lies about you *are* non-essentials."

Toni's eyes glowed. In his foreign, roundabout way, this boy was the first to return to Toni's side. Toni leaned forward. "Herr Merle, I thank you. I think I'll follow your advice. I'll see my friend, Spat, and ask him to intervene in my behalf so that I won't lose my position at St. Anna's." He winked at the boys. "It wouldn't do to lose any part of my income now. Not with our plans to introduce my Third

Symphony." He jumped to his feet and went over to the piano. He began to play Bach's theme on his own name: B-A-C-H (H being the German sign for B natural). The main theme was as simple and innocent as a nursery song, then the three other voices wound around it, weaving the pattern of a beautiful fugue. The students had risen and stood grouped around the piano. The sun shone through the tall windows. Toni frowned with concentration.

III.

2.

That's the way with gossip. It spreads like spilled water. The very day the article about Toni had appeared in one paper, other papers followed suit, bringing the shocking news out in their own versions. No one was sure, but it was evident that something picturesquely immoral must have taken place. Gullible persons who had never quite known whether Bruckner was the one with the hook nose—confusing him with Brahms, the one with the black full beard—now suddenly recalled having noticed Toni's eyes follow the girls in shameless fashion. Within a few days the news had passed the city gates and had trickled out into the town of Linz where it made a great stir, and finally it went home to roost in the village of St. Florian.

The board of directors of the Conservatory of Music did not know what to think, and the nuns at St. Anna's, although

convinced of Toni's innocence, transferred him from the girls' to the boys' class to satisfy the girls' parents. A regular campaign was being waged between the anti and the pro Brucknerians who went so far as to thrash one another in the streets. Leaflets were distributed, whose incompetent, youthfully rebellious contents were intended to answer the aggressive columns appearing in all the newspapers of the country.

Toni gave way to despair. He had believed that the talent God had given him, coupled with hard work, would enable him to do something for the benefit of others, but now he found it hard to keep above water himself. One day, at St. Anna's, he happened to see the girl he was said to have insulted. He went straight toward her and, as soon as she saw him, she almost flew in his direction.

"I'm so awfully sorry, Fräulein Mitzi," he said.

"*You* are sorry," she cried, and tears sprang from her eyes like April showers from a sunny sky. "*I* am so desperately sorry, I can't find words to express my feelings," she told him. "Just look!" Gathering her skirt tightly around her slim waist, she showed him how much weight she had lost on account of the scandal.

"Oh, but Fräulein Mitzi," Toni said, shocked. "It's not worth it. You mustn't lose one decagram because of a humble man like myself." Nevertheless he was touched by her sympathy.

"I never went near that editor, Herr Bruckner. You must believe me," the girl said pleadingly. "Yet I have been the indirect cause of all your trouble and I thought it was up to

me to try to get you out of it. I spoke with my father and he insisted that the newspapers print a rectification. I hope they'll bring it out to-morrow."

"I don't know how to thank you, Fräulein Mitzi." Toni blushed.

"Now you really can set your mind at rest, Herr Bruckner. I made it all quite clear to my father. The right is on your side and he'll know how to handle those liars. He'll keep harping on the matter of proofs and there aren't any as you know. So don't worry, Herr Bruckner, everything will be straightened out soon."

"I wish I could kiss your hand for that," Toni said to the young girl, "but if anybody saw me do it I'd probably be expelled from St. Anna's." He twinkled gaily. There seemed to be no more cause for alarm. "By the way, Fräulein Mitzi, how is your music getting along?"

She shook her head in mock despair. "You know I'm hopeless."

"But perhaps you have some hidden talent," he consoled her.

She looked around as though to see if anyone were near, then signalled him to follow her to the window. She opened a drawing book that was hidden between her music sheets and showed him the sketches she had drawn of her classmates.

"Why, these are excellent," Toni said in honest admiration.

She gave a little sigh. "Young ladies do fine needlework or study music. If they *must* draw they do fruit and flower

compositions, but certainly not people, that would not be ladylike," she said sarcastically. Then, as voices were heard, she waved him a quick good-bye and flew down the corridor.

"I must remember that," Toni said to himself. "A way must be found to help that young girl develop her unusual talent."

* * *

Next morning the first rectification appeared in "Lustige Blätter." It was stated that since there was insufficient evidence to support a charge against Herr Bruckner, the case had been dropped. "Of course, we too think him innocent now," was sarcastically observed. The situation seemed more hopeless than ever. Toni wanted to see Franz and ask him for advice, but he was afraid that his evil reputation might harm his friend, so he quickly changed his plans. He sat in his room, the magazine on the window sill before him, and began to turn the pages. There were cartoons too, showing him, bowing deeply, in a gesture of constant servility.

The handle of the door rattled and a draught moved the pages. Toni turned. Franz stood in the doorway, carrying a rubber bag under his arm.

"Come swimming with me, Toni, won't you? I feel like plunging into good clean water."

Toni shook his head. "I've got to go to St. Anna's."

"I think you'd better absent yourself for a day," Franz said. "I've been in touch with the Minister of Education. I told him that it was up to him to protect his teachers from calumnies and all the ruthless gutterwork of the press. But it may take him a day or two to get his measures through."

Toni sat very still.—And meanwhile the nuns at St. Anna's might dismiss him, that's what Franz seemed to think. In another day the Minister's word might be too late. "Vienna is no place for me," he said abruptly. "I should never have come here."

"You didn't come because you wanted to live in the city, Toni. You were not spurred by self-seeking or thought of gain. You came because you thought that through your music you might demonstrate the things you believe in and which you were powerless to express in words."

"Yes, that is true," Toni said. "But since I have failed, I should go away before I cause any more damage."

Franz dismissed this with an impatient wave of his hand. "The stakes are high, Toni, and you know it. So don't run away because of an unpleasant incident which will be forgotten in a short time. Come swimming with me. A plunge into the cold Danube will wash a lot of trouble out of your head."

"All right, let's go," Toni said, deeply moved by Franz's new sign of friendship.

They took the streetcar to Nussdorf and from there they walked upstream along the Danube. Franz's laughing eyes looked straight into Toni's troubled ones, then travelled over his friend's strong hands and his broad shoulders. "I'm glad you are strong, Toni. The Danube is treacherous, full of hidden currents. I know pretty well where they are. Still I might overlook one. If you feel that you are being pulled toward the bottom, let yourself go along, that's much better than fighting it, for the eddies usually don't go all the way

down every time. In the next swirl they'll move closer to the surface and if you move with them you'll be carried downstream and out of danger."

They found little cabins in Klosterneuburg where they could change into their swimming suits. They put their clothes into a waterproof bag which they took along with them.

"Now look," Franz said, as they walked out toward the river. "You see, where the water swirls it's usually shallow and you must be careful not to strike a stone. There again, where it's so very smooth it is usually very deep, and there may be eddies in the depths." They sat down on a pile of rocks that formed a kind of dam. "Over there again, where the water flows so swiftly, is a channel. If you lie flat it will carry you downstream more quickly than an express train. It's really great fun, you'll see, but you must keep a cool head on your shoulders."

They went to a deep place where they could dive in without hitting a stone. Avoiding the bad spots or going carefully through them for sheer devilment, they swam for a while side by side. "Isn't this wonderful?" Toni shouted. "Doesn't it make you feel prickly all over, as though you were swimming in champagne?"

Franz laughed. "When did you last drink champagne?"

"After Prelate Mayr's investiture. That was the first and also the last time," Toni told Franz. "After the performance of my Missa Solemnis I wasn't invited to the dinner, and I thought I really had deserved a treat and decided to console myself and bought a bottle of champagne and drank it with the gardener of the monastery."

A steamboat went by and Toni and Franz shouted with the joy of being carried up high and dropped down low again in the hills and dales of the waves in the wake of the ship. The water of the Danube felt cold and tickling to the skin. It reminded him at least of 'Kracherl,' that wonderful drink you get in all the little inns in the Vienna woods.

Franz seemed to know everything about the Danube. He scrutinized its surface and, when a swimming branch could be seen violently rotating, then disappearing, he cautiously started toward midstream. Toni could just relax and stay close to his friend who was watching out for both of them. He turned over on his back, and holding on to the rubber sack in which they carried their clothes, he let the current carry him downstream. The clouds overhead were as fleecy as little lambs. The bank to one side was flat and the low back of the Bisamberg seemed far away in the sun's vapor. But on the other side, the Leopoldsberg, with its castle peeping out of the dark woods, was steep, its slope scarred by a snow-white quarry. The Danube looked less menacing with the sunlight striking the green scum-crowned waves. Suddenly, as often happens on this unpredictable river, Toni felt a stubborn tug at his legs and the water seemed to slip away beneath him.

He could stay under water with his eyes open. Remembering that he should not try to resist the current, he sank toward the bottom of the river. 'Danube so blue,' Johann Strauss had sung, but the Danube was as green as moss, and the elves, instead of dancing a waltz, were probably dreaming, lulled by the melody of Johann Brahms' Cradle Song. 'Good evening, good night.' Toni had let go of the clothes

bag which was a pity; it could float better than any strong swimmer and might well save him. However, there was no immediate cause for worry. Toni had taken a deep breath just before going down and his lungs could hold this air a while longer. Yes, when in a feeling of blissful admiration he had wanted to take the whole world in, he had taken a very deep breath, indeed. 'Good evening, good night.' He felt himself whirled around with terrific speed, then he flew straight up to the surface as though shot out of a cannon.

On the bank Franz stood gesticulating amidst a group of monks from the near-by monastery. Perhaps someone who could not swim very well has been drowned, Toni decided. Quickly he made his way toward the people on the shore. When they saw him, they gesticulated even more and beckoned to him. He continued to swim toward the riverbank.

A beautiful song, that lullaby. Toni's lyrical compositions were not half as good as Brahms.

He crawled out carefully on all fours to soften the thrust of the waves against the big pointed rocks. "That Brahms indeed," he said, shaking hands, "quite a composer."

"That's my friend, Toni Bruckner," Franz told the monks. "And, as you see, the time you spend with him is never dull. If it isn't his music that's turning your heart inside out, then it's something else." He put an arm around the dripping man. "You had me scared for awhile, old man, but, as I saw just now, you can really swim."

"Did I hear you say your friend is a musician?" One of the monks asked, wiping his red forehead with a big handkerchief.

"And what a wonderful musician!" Franz told him. "An organist and a composer as well."

"Oh, but then we must hear him play. Would you do us the honor of playing for us at the monastery?" he turned to Toni.

Toni looked doubtfully at himself and his friend. They were certainly not dressed for a social call.

"I don't believe you've seen the inside of our church either," a thin, ascetic-looking monk said to Franz.

"Of course, I've seen it, and I've been in your big vineyards and in your cellar. I was even on your slide on St. Leopold's day."

They all laughed and told Toni of a big barrel in the monastery's cellars. You could climb to the top of it by a ladder and then slide down the other side. Children used to love it, and every year on St. Leopold's day—honored by order of the Habsburgs of whom so many bore his name—the cellars were open to the public.

"You could swim part of the way to the monastery and change into your clothes in one of the gardeners' little houses. Then you could either go one station on the local train or walk along the Danube for half an hour." The monk glowed with the joy of hospitality. His pale face flushed. His lean hard features softened.

"How can we swim upstream?" Toni asked, puzzled.

"There's a dead arm of the Danube right beyond the dam." The monks were speaking eagerly and all together now.

Toni's face lit up when he saw in Franz's hand the clothes

bag he had thought lost. He took a few steps across the dam. Surely the greenish, immobile water down there bore no resemblance to the swift, whirling river Enns, on whose banks he had enjoyed such good times, nor did the spires which rose slim and straight toward the clear sky remind him of his boyhood home whose image he had carried in a special niche in his mind all these years. Yet he felt a strange sense of homecoming. He went back to the group of men near the Danube. "Can you see the monastery from here?" he asked.

"Certainly. Those two high steeples belong to the church, and the cupola beside them to the monastery. There's a Habsburg crown on top of it, but you can't see it from here."

"There's a hospital connected with the monastery too. We are trying to minister to the people's needs, both the spiritual and the physical ones. But nobody understands this better than you, Herr Bruckner. You are writing music for them. That's more than any of us can do."

Toni winced and he felt overwhelmed by the old feeling of shame and frustration, as one of the monks went on, admiringly. "I think your *Missa solemnis* is the greatest church composition ever written. I had no idea that it was your creation until Herr Spat informed me just now. And he says that it cannot compare with your symphonies, nor with the orchestra music you are planning to write. Just think of being able to reach people's hearts through one's music." He stretched out his arms. "Oh, to be Herr Bruckner for just one day!"

Toni stood very still. The monk sounded so sincere! Slowly Toni followed Franz across the dam.

"If we do swim as you suggested, it may take us some time to overtake you," Franz called back to the monks.

Toni nodded. "It certainly will take *me* time," he murmured to himself, and it was not of swimming up the Danube arm that he thought.

How much slower you went in standing water than in a rushing stream. Every yard you put behind you, you owed to your honest effort. There were rows and rows of tents on the shores. Young women in bathing suits sat in the sun, knitting or sewing. There were a few men too, most of them busily making repairs on their weather-beaten boats.

"Those tents are called 'love-nests'," Franz said. "The dam, this side of the Danube, is known as the 'Weekenders' Paradise'."

Toni did not know what to think. He felt a strange sympathy for these young people who, in spite of law and custom, gave way to their natural instincts. They looked so innocent.

"Those girls look innocent," Franz said, as though he had read Toni's thoughts. "But they aren't. They give themselves too readily. They go from one man to another and usually end up at the Klosterneuburg hospital. There is a sanatorium near-by too, at Gugging. That's for the insane. 'Liberalism' is a very catching word. The right to follow your natural instincts seems very appealing, indeed. But, when you come right down to it, it causes terrific disorder. Denying the existence of laws is even worse than breaking them." Lying on his back, with his strong, handsome face toward the sun, and swimming with slow powerful strokes, Franz developed his ideas.

Near the end of the stretch of water stood a little sanctuary in a grove of chestnut trees—a Madonna in a niche with a hassock before it and several holy pictures suspended from the branches. Well, Toni told himself, they haven't done away with this. How many grottos of this kind he had known in his own familiar Upper Austria! How many times had he brought fresh flowers for the crucifix in the woods near the monastery of St. Florian! How scared he had been on his way there, and how reassured in the presence of the Holy Symbol!

This was the gardeners' little settlement, just like the one on the outskirts of St. Florian. And now, suddenly, as they scrambled out of the water and onto the shore, he saw the familiar sight of a hothouse, its windows all blinded with boards. But the cottage they entered, after dressing in the hothouse, lacked the Herrgott's corner that lent such warmth to the homes along the Enns. Instead of the big Bible, there was a cheap edition of *The Origin of the Species,* lying on the console between the two windows of the bare and seemingly unused living-room. It was a strange coincidence that an atomizer lay right beside it, and it seemed to Toni that it was religion which was being atomized.

They confessed to the friendly gardener that they had intruded into the well-protected privacy of his young plants, and he smiled and asked them to stay for the hot noonday meal. He was so happy to receive real 'intellectuals' in his house and to be able to converse with them. He threw a meaningful glance toward the book on the console. Toni assumed that Darwin's work was the first book the gardener

had read since he had put away the Bible, and that the man worshipped it. It was a 'scientific' book, yet he had been able to understand it, or, at least, he had come close to an understanding of it. It was a good book, without doubt, and beyond criticism too, because it was scientific. It also freed him of a sense of responsibility and of the unpleasant consciousness of sin. Altogether, it inspired 'liberating' ideas.

They couldn't stay, Franz said. They were expected in the monastery. "You know," he said casually, his hand upon the volume of Darwin, "that fifteen hundred years ago, St. Augustine of Hippo explained his view of the Genesis by expounding a 'creation by development' as contrasted with 'special creation'?"

"Is that true?" the gardener asked in great surprise, rubbing the big callus on his work-hardened right hand. "And just think that I believed it was the scientists who had uncovered the real truth and knew everything—the beginning and the end and the cause of all that exists."

"You, a gardener, talking like that!" Franz said with mild reproach. "Don't you see how your little plants come out of the soil, growing by a power no scientist can explain? The biochemists might analyze for you the elements of which your spinach is composed. But tell them to put all those elements together, will they be able to make spinach for you?"

The gardener scratched his head. "You have me there," he said with an embarrassed little smile.

"Why don't you take out your Bible again? At least give it an equal chance?" Toni asked the young man, who seemed so eager, so full of goodwill and so confused.

The gardener said his father had told him the same thing and he would think about it. Toni and Franz thanked him again for his kindness and bade him good-bye.

Walking along a garden path, the two took a short cut toward the monastery. The bells were ringing the *Angelus*. The people in the garden remained bent over their task. Not one straightened up, not one of them made the sign of the cross on his forehead. A girl braided her hair, using the water in a rain barrel as a mirror. A boy played a square dance on a comb wrapped in tissue paper. And the Angelus is just a five minute devotion to the Lord and after it the work goes twice as fast, Toni thought, sadly. From a narrow pathway, overrun by huge cucumbers and pumpkins, he could see a row of factory buildings where people worked on a production line and every minute counted. There were children laboring in those huge structures, too. Toni could not bear to look at them any longer; his eyes sought the tips of the two spires in the blue vault of the noonday sky. Only in the monastery would everything be as it had always been. A hint of the commercial spirit perhaps, the only concession to modern days, as evidenced by the wine cellars of which Franz had spoken. This was merely an external matter of survival. The atmosphere of the monastery would be the one he remembered.

They walked along a level road. The sun beat down on them and was reflected from the snow-white gravel which burned through the soles of their shoes like fresh lava. The air seemed to move in white circles as though it were boiling and Toni felt a strange feeling of faintness come over him. It was as it had been on the day when, with his mother, he

had struggled up the road toward the monastery of St. Florian. He could almost believe that he was still a boy dressed in his father's Sunday clothes, his heart, torn by his father's death, bleeding like one vast wound. It seemed to him that his mother was walking near him in the flesh. Perhaps he had had a touch of the sun, or had swallowed too much of the Danube water and had contracted some sort of sickness, he told himself, for he knew very well that it was Franz, his friend, who moved beside him, keeping silent because of the terrible heat. Yet, Toni could hear his mother's nimble steps on the pebbles. They were faster than his own and always had been. Then, as a peasant woman passed them, he saw the familiar black kerchief that his mother had tied and untied that day, this gesture the only sign of her nervousness.

He wanted to run after her, but she did not wait. As tirelessly as she had baked and cooked and done the washing, she hurried ahead of him and he stumbled after her, his heavy feet unable to accelerate their speed. Every now and then she looked back, her loving smile carefully hidden beneath a mask of maternal strictness and dignity.

At any moment now the monastery should appear, white and enormous, with rows and rows of windows, side by side, like bars of music. Meanwhile there was nothing but the sun's haze hovering above the swiftly moving river. When, at the next crossroad, there was still no sign of the monastery, Toni's disappointment was almost unbearable, but then, just as on that day he remembered so well, the monastery suddenly loomed up before them like a castle in a fairy tale.

The peasant woman was far ahead now and turning to the

right. Toni resolved to follow the same route, no matter what Franz might be planning. But when, unhesitatingly, Franz followed after her, Toni became strangely excited. He was sure he was being led along by some higher will and he was not at all surprised when he found himself in front of a high wrought-iron fence which showed the bronze patina of age. The big elm trees behind it had grown stouter and threw a bigger shadow upon the small pond in the center of the monastery courtyard. 'Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam.' Toni read these words that he had read daily at the monastery of St. Florian, and they had never touched him more deeply.

In front of the entrance door stood the woman who had passed them on the road. She was loosening her black kerchief, her work-hardened fingers moving more deftly than you would expect. She was by no means beautiful, with her face flushed from the heat and streaked with sweat and dust, and her shoes cracked and trodden down—yet to Toni she seemed perfect. He wanted to run up to her and tell her that this was not the right door, that this was not the place where free lunches were distributed, but he knew that she would only wave the suggestion away with a quick, imperious wave of her hand that seemed to say that food was not important.

"Don't you remember, Toni," she seemed to ask, "how disappointed you were with the world that day when you made your first visit to St. Florian? Don't you recall how indignant you were with the world over what you thought was the injustice of a stranger's being appointed to a teaching job

in Ansfelden? But wasn't all your bitterness wiped out after a short time with the good Prelate? Weren't you full of strength and purpose when we walked back down the steep road together?"

"May I first go into the church, please?" Toni asked the monk who opened the door.

"I would suggest your cooling off a little in one of our waiting-rooms first. The Prelate will be here to receive you," the gate-keeper suggested in a tone of concern. "He will want to show you our organ himself."

But Toni was not yet ready to meet the Prelate. He hoped to pull himself together once he was in the choir-loft alone. "Please," he said, pleadingly.

Of course, it was just as he had known it would be. In the choir-loft he was at once at home. Everything here was familiar. The brass pipes stood in orderly rows. The *Dolce* and the *Mezza Voce* sign plates were blurred a little from being used more than all the other stops. There were a few music stands in a corner, and on the floor a pink ribbon lost by a girl on the soprano side. To Toni's mind came the sound of a soaring chorus as beautiful as though heaven's angels were singing it. The purple voices of the bass and the violet dark ones of the alto were mingled in it. Why had he allowed bitter and painful thoughts to crowd into his heart? Why had he let anxiety and uncertainty pervade his whole being? Sitting before the organ, his face toward the tabernacle, his eyes on the monstrance, the snow-white Holy Wafer amidst the golden rays, he could hardly remember the gloomy thoughts of the morning. The smell of incense came

floating up from the nave as it always had. The holy statues stood beneath their canopies which were golden in the mid-day sun.

In this familiar atmosphere, Toni's mood altered curiously. He felt suddenly so active, so full of plans. Was it the nearness of the Mystical Body which raised his downcast soul so much? He began to look at himself with a new objectivity and no longer to measure himself by the opinion of others. It was as though, in this church, he had recovered the self-confidence he had enjoyed in his boyhood at St. Florian. It was as though the essence of the good fathers' teaching were concealed in this choir-loft.

As he began to play, it seemed to him that he had never been away from the monastery. He could almost believe that the clock had been turned back, and that even the world outside was still reverent and true to God. He could almost see himself run down the steep road from the monastery to the highway. He could almost hear the hoarse voices of the vendors at the Sunday fairs, and taste the Turkish honey they sold at their little booths along with prayer-books and rosaries. Sitting there on the organ bench, peering down into the nave, he suddenly stiffened. A tall man was walking down the middle aisle. His gait was strangely rigid, like that of a soldier. His big Roman nose, so much like Toni's, dominated his tanned, intelligent face. 'Prelate Arneth,' Toni whispered. This was a trick of his senses, he knew, for the Prelate had long been dead. Yet, he could hear the steps on the tiled floor reechoing from the walls of the church. And when he closed his eyes, he could hear the Prelate's voice.

"God's will must be done. That is our end and purpose, that through us His will shall be done. Don't you know that?"

Toni's heart began to beat faster with his overmastering happiness. "Did you come here to remind me, Herr Prelate?" he asked, all his thoughts concentrated upon the figure in the middle aisle.

"Didn't I give you an assignment?" the priest down below asked. "Didn't I tell you to go out into the world and to preach God's truth in a clearer and more subtle language than I have at my disposal?" The priest's voice was less imperious now and his Roman face had changed into that of the German Michael. His dreamy eyes looked grave and the crosier in his hand, touched by a beam of sunlight that came in through the high, colored church windows, looked like a flaming sword.

Toni sat very still. He dared not speak, but, unconsciously, his fingers kept on moving over the keyboard. "I have thought of myself," he admitted. "I have been worried about my success, about my reputation. I have been afraid of the little inconveniences of everyday life. That is why I lost the sight of my shining goal. But it shall never happen again."

He was not sure now whether he was speaking to Prelate Arneth or to Bishop Rudigier. But it did not matter. There was no difference between them. "Lord have mercy upon me," Toni prayed, not realizing that he was playing the Kyrie motif of his Fifth Symphony. "Christ have mercy upon me." Softly and still more softly he played, his fingers creeping slowly over the keyboard. "We must approach Our Lord on tiptoe." It was his father who had taught him this. Father

Bruckner, in a shiny, much-worn black suit, now appeared in the church nave, and, with his eyes upon God, he looked exactly like a priest.

The devil had tempted Toni and had distracted him from his goal, because, in unforgivable vanity, Toni had allowed himself to be hurt by empty words. How can anyone create whose mind is poisoned by reproachful thoughts? "Woe be to those who live on this earth," a chorus of angels sang. Yet, this earth is beautiful, oh, so beautiful! God, in His great charity, has allowed His stars to shine down upon it! If you will only believe! If you will only take up the struggle against the antichrist and the devils who crowd about you! If you will only be willing to march in that procession of holy men, led by those three down in the middle aisle. Your faith is worth the titanic struggle! Sharpen your fighting spirit once more!

The wind instruments took over, uniting in a mighty choral. The doors of Paradise opened, and a new, great confidence filled Toni's heart as the big death bell began to toll. Are you ready, really ready? Look down again upon the beauty and the confusion of the world. Then look up to heaven where the Lord Himself is waiting to unite you with Himself in a spiritual wedding. Can you still be afraid when the open horizon envelops you in rapture? Don't you see that the angels are fighting at your side, helping you to throw the devil into the abyss?

This is my last Finale, Toni thought. No matter what I may write in the future, I shall never again compose a finale. The devil is conquered and the abyss is sealed above

him. Never more can he escape. And for God there shall be no end!

The knot inside him was loosened, and, as he walked out into the garden which was still warm, although the sun was now setting, he felt the deep blessing of its peace.

Franz and several monks were sitting at ease around a wooden table. A lay brother was placing food before them from his big tray. "I'm so glad you came while everything is still nice and hot," he told Toni. "Twice-heated food is never very tasty."

Dazed, Toni looked around him. The horizon blazed, and the Danube seemed to be consumed in its flames. He must have played on for many hours! A breeze came from the water and he shivered a little as though he had a fever. A tall monk whom he had not seen before whispered something to another one who rose immediately and went toward the house.

"We listened to your playing for a long time inside the church," the tall monk said to Toni. "I'm Prelate Probst. Come here and sit down beside me." He pulled Toni onto a narrow garden bench. "It was time for us to have our dinner before the evening services, but having it brought out here gave us the opportunity to hear your playing too."

"I think you must have composed at least one new symphony, if not two," Franz said, smiling.

The lay brother came from the house with a coat for Toni and the Prelate himself helped him put it on. Gradually Toni returned to reality and his eyes began to perceive the men at the table, who seemed to look at him with much

respect. He gazed at his big hands which always seemed so clumsy to him, and thought with deep gratitude how the Lord's tender Ones had guided them.

Gradually the sound-world around him became normal again and he no longer heard the secret, whispering voices which he had listened to so intently, anxious to reproduce in his playing exactly what they told him. There were snatches of songs, and gay young laughter was carried along on the wind.

"He is still music-haunted," Toni heard Franz say, "and it takes him a little time, but I can see that he's coming round."

"Let him alone for a while," the Prelate answered. "In his way he is praying, and one mustn't disturb prayer."

At that moment the sound of many, many voices rose from the Danube like the ensemble of the instruments of an orchestra, and a boat, garlanded with flowers, came floating down the river, then another one and another. The multi-colored dresses of the girls in the boats shone vividly in the strong light of the setting sun.

"Is there a feast to-day?"

"It's St. John's day, the twenty-fourth of June," the Prelate explained. "In point of fact, it's the day of the summer solstice, and they are going to light fires on top of the Bisamberg and dance around them, and it is said that the couples who dare jump over the flames will be married the same year." He laughed good-naturedly.

"How pure their singing is," Toni said. "It's a joy to listen to it."

"It's one of their happiest days," said the thin, spiritual-

looking monk they had met that morning on the bank of the Danube. "The Viennese are never more united than in their moments of celebration. Then there's no discord, no hard feeling."

On top of the Bisamberg, flames could be seen leaping up and the sky was now lit by a dual light—the dying sun and the exploding fireworks.

"It is strange," Toni said, "that I should have felt so lost among the Viennese, so foreign, as if I didn't belong."

The Prelate was pouring each of them a glass of sparkling Austrian wine. He raised his glass and, turning it slowly between his fingers, watching the mounting air bubbles, he said: "They are like children," and his voice trembled a little. "You give them your love and your prayers."

Your love and your prayers. How simply the Prelate had expressed it. Toni too had wanted to be of use to them, to do great things for them, but it had seemed impossible to reach their hearts. He had then tried to hide behind a curtain of shame and hurt pride. Now, as their singing rose about him, he knew that he would never again withhold himself or try to free himself from them for fear of being hurt.

Across the table, Franz looked at him with loving understanding. "Herr Bruckner's creative superiority has always weighed upon him," he explained to the priests. "He wanted to give, he felt responsible for the rest of the world, but, at the same time, sensed that somehow he was exalting himself."

The Prelate frowned slightly. "Is that pear tree over there too proud to give of the fruit with which it is laden?" he

asked, and his smile and the kindness of his tone took all hint of preaching out of his words. "Don't you prefer to a locked bucket well a fountain at which you can fill your cup?"

"If you are truly humble," said another monk, looking directly at Toni out of the depths of his blue eyes, "you must realize that you cannot reveal to other men what does not already lie half awake in the cradle of their minds. Do not forget that they, too, are children of God. You aren't giving them wings. You are only teaching them how to fly."

Toni still had not been able to start on his food. Very quietly he gazed out across the river and over the fields beyond. How lucky he was to be able to compose for the Viennese. All he had to do was bring the music out of space, let it pour note by note into their receptive hearts. Thus his love for God which had passed into his music would become their own.

III.

3.

The afternoon was drawing to a close and the big Vienna Skating Rink shimmered under the flickering gaslights. Toni stood beyond the railing, his hands touching the iron net that separated him from the gay crowd circling or swooping by like so many birds. A feeling of warmth flooded his veins. No longer did he feel lost in this city, no longer did he hide in solitude. Now, he went so far as to seek out the liveliest places, the thronging quays, the theatres and the markets,

or, as to-day, the Skating Rink. He had come to love the gay, carefree Viennese people.

Toni's thoughts were lost in his contemplation of the skaters. He had almost forgotten that he was on his way to the Concert-House, that this was to be one of the greatest evenings of his life. His Third Symphony was going to be performed by the Gesellschafts Concert, and Franz, the friend who understood him better than anyone else, was going to conduct it.

The skaters glided by in pairs or in rows, a delight to the eye. Toni liked best the little boys with their red running noses and their rakish caps, who reminded him of the boys back in Ansfelden. Of course, he liked the little girls, too, with their round wet mouths which were never quite closed. No doubt, too, he liked the young men who moved with a little swagger as though the world were theirs, and the young women who rocked gently like cradles. He liked the old people as well, the white-haired, moustached gentlemen who still found so much enjoyment in the sport of their youth, and the plump ladies who skated so gracefully on their small feet. As a matter of fact, Toni found them all lovable, and the thought of them made him happy.

A carriage drew up close by, and a pleasant voice called out to him. Toni turned around and found himself face to face with Count Troller.

"Oh, Your Highness!" Toni cried, snatching his hat off and bowing deeply. "I'm so pleased to see you again!"

He crossed the pavement in two big strides. "I am so happy to have this opportunity to talk to you," he said impulsively. "You don't know what it means to have sufficient

money to hold proper rehearsals for a performance. The gift you sent me was therefore more than welcome and deeply appreciated."

"The money was really intended to cover the costs of publishing your Third Symphony, Herr Bruckner," Count Troller said. "Ever since you persuaded me to change my opinion in favor of Bishop Rudigier, I knew I owed you a reward for giving me a clear conscience."

"I knew what the money was meant for," Toni confessed, "but I did think a perfect performance was more important."

"You are the judge," the Count said with a little shrug. "I know you are efficient. After all, I am not easily persuaded."

The Count smiled and Toni smiled too, because both of them knew that his last remark was not quite true; he was too much of a Viennese.

"Now, in all seriousness, do you remember that you have a concert to attend to-night?"

"It's still early, Herr Count."

"As far as I'm concerned I always like to be early. Come, let me drive you there."

Toni would have preferred to spend the hour before his concert alone. He had planned to reach the concert hall at the last minute to avoid the nerve-racking preparations. It would be senseless to become all wrought up over little unevennesses in the orchestra's playing, which would surely become smooth under the gifted touch of Franz, who was so well-known as a conductor. But, when the footman opened the carriage door for him, Toni stepped in and sat down

stiffly beside the Count. The servant climbed upon a small trunk at the rear of the carriage and, swinging the reins across the roof of the coach, he whistled to the horses and they drew away.

"I feel confident today," Toni said shyly, "because I'm presenting a Symphony which I have dedicated to Richard Wagner, the master." He spoke quietly, showing in his voice all the reverence he felt. "He chose it himself," Toni told the Count happily. "The one that starts with the trumpet motif," he wrote me, "to make sure there would be no mistake."

"Do you really think so highly of Wagner?" The Count thoughtfully stroked the high silk hat on his knees.

"He himself asked me the very same question, and in response I knelt down before him," Toni said.

"Before a mere man?"

"No, but before the divine in him," Toni said. Then he laughed. "Of course, somebody happened to see us, and the whole episode appeared in all the "Lustige Blätter" the very next day."

"Quite an advertisement." The Count looked amused. "Not that you need it any longer. After your great successes in Paris, Nancy and London, the Austrian audience is yours. Foreign opinion has always counted a great deal here."

Toni relaxed a little. "Sometimes I wish it were Wagner performing to-day instead of me, because I think the Viennese should have the best."

"You think the Viennese should visit the Venusberg rather than heaven?"

"I certainly don't think so," Toni said eagerly, "and thank

you for reminding me. I have only one ambition in life—to bring the world into the Arms of God."

The Count started to laugh and Toni looked at him in surprise. Then he colored. "Why do you laugh? Is not religion the most important thing? Aren't people who recognize no God quite unable to experience all the beautiful emotions of the spiritual life? Isn't their existence quite empty?"

"I wasn't laughing at your statement." The Count patted Toni's arm. "It was just a little strange to see you so solemn amidst all the gaiety with which the very air of Vienna is permeated."

"Well," Toni said hesitatingly, "I do think that a certain kind of gaiety is quite compatible with the worship of Our Lord."

Count Troller nodded every so slightly. "Well, Herr Bruckner, I wish you luck. Please forgive me if I leave the concert ahead of time. I haven't been feeling too well lately."

"I understand," Toni said. "I do hope, though, that you will be able to stay until the end of my symphony."

They looked out at the crowd, pushing and pressing against the doors of the Concert House. "There are so many!" Toni cried happily.

As he stepped out of the carriage, he caught little bits of conversation. "They say he has performed abroad . . . has charmed everyone . . ."

"Again, good luck," the Count said and, leaning heavily upon his cane and assisted by his footman, he walked up the steps to the main entrance.

For a moment Toni considered the beleaguered little stage door, then he decided to walk into the auditorium like any other concert-goer. Once inside, he began to discern the familiar faces of the members of the Young Wagnerian Club among the standees. The youths seemed beside themselves. He could picture their eyes glowing with fanaticism, their breath coming heavily with ecstasy. They were carrying the standard for him, and some worshipped him almost to the point of deification. It was not right!

The concert-hall seemed to be permeated with classical music. Beethoven's mighty chords still vibrated in the crystal chandeliers; Bach's fugal themes reechoed from the pipes of the frontal organ. Would his modern harmonies be able to supplant these? Toni mused. He leaned against a wall, immersed in thought. Since he had been living in Vienna, he had begun to realize that the world the Viennese called 'liberal' was in fact anything but free. It was being stifled with competition, quarrels and even physical violence. But, if you locked yourself into God's world there was no argument, no opposition, and if one faithful outdid the other, it was because of an exuberance of charity and love. "Let me show them this, O Lord," Toni prayed. "And You, O Jesus, Who asked God to help You perform a miracle for Lazarus, so that the people who stood around You might believe that The Father sent You, help me this day that my music may have the right influence upon the people. I can do nothing without You."

A group of men had gathered in the box above Toni's head. He recognized Hecht among them. There were other critics too, looking indifferent, as though they were here

merely for the purpose of recording public reaction. A nervous tremor passed through Toni. Then, to his great joy, he saw his students, Schaller and Low, in the box adjoining Hecht's. The young men had probably spent their last kreutzer for these seats, so that they might be close to Hecht, and counteract his poisonous darts. "I thank you very much," he murmured happily. He was just about to call out their names, when some unusually loud conversation reached him and shook him profoundly.

"I don't think we should be here to-day," Low said in a sharp tone. "This seems to be a gathering of writers."

"Writers!" Schaller cried. "Writers, you call them? No, my dear man. Writers are artists, but these are scientists, anatomists!"

"Speaking of scientists," Hecht interrupted them loudly, "the presence of a psychiatrist, this evening, would no doubt be very desirable. That Bruckner is a lunatic, and the only thing he has succeeded in doing so far, is to flout all the principles of music."

Toni tried to move out of earshot, but chattering groups blocked the aisles on both sides.

"Don't you worry!" Low's voice sounded almost as cold as Hecht's. "Even if Herr Bruckner is a revolutionary and does break the rules as we know them, it simply means that he is creating new principles that will last forever. They may seem unintelligible at first, but you will come to understand them as you hear more of his work."

This statement increased Toni's wretchedness. If Hecht, the keen critic, could not grasp his music at once, the public

would be even slower to enjoy his harmonies. And he wished so much to compose so that everyone would understand!

"I don't envy poor Spat to-day," Hecht said. "He has quite a job ahead of him, and I hope that the audience will treat him kindly."

Then one of the group added: "It's better to be devoured by the critics than torn to pieces by the public. We are not bloodhounds." He chuckled at his own witticism.

Toni's students sat in stony silence.

"Have you any idea as to what your master is going to convey to us to-day?" Hecht asked.

"Why, of course!" Schaller's voice trembled a little.

"He is going to interpret me again," Toni thought unhappily, directing his steps toward the artists' room. "These dissectors and these interpreters! They are poles apart in spirit, and they are equally remote from an understanding of creative art. Why explain music? Melody is everywhere. In drooping flower calices, in soaring trees, in playing children, in shifting clouds. Music is everywhere, as God is everywhere. It wafts you beyond the limits of the earth. It is a sin against music to interpret music."

The men in the orchestra started to tune their instruments. The drummer tapped his fingers on the kettledrum. The concert-master guided his bow over the strings with assumed detachment. The attendants were closing the doors. Toni sat down upon one of the velvet chairs in the front row and lifted his eyes trustingly toward the podium. He started nervously as someone tapped him on the shoulder.

"Herr Bruckner!" It was his student Dalcor speaking.

"You will have to conduct your symphony yourself, I'm afraid. Herr Spat was suddenly taken ill. He cannot be here this evening."

The flickering light of the chandelier revealed the pity in Dalcor's sensitive face, and Toni could hear an undertone of deep sorrow in his voice. It must be serious, very serious if Franz could not come. Toni conjured up the face of his dearly beloved friend, Franz's cheeks had seemed rather flushed and hollow of late, and he had been coughing a great deal.

"Is he dead?" he asked in a low voice, already knowing that his fears were true.

"Yes, Herr Bruckner, he is dead," Dalcor said simply, honestly. "I wish you hadn't asked me that question."

A terrible heaviness settled upon Toni. He tried to lift his arm, but felt unable to do so. I must gather myself together right now, he thought, else I shall be crushed by my sorrow. "I suppose I must prepare myself to conduct." His voice was almost inaudible.

"You will? You really will?" Dalcor's voice was vibrant with joy.

An inward strength seemed to creep almost magically over Toni. It puzzled him and even saddened him that he could recover so quickly from so deep a hurt. He rallied his spiritual forces to answer Dalcor. "Did you think I would give up because of this first setback. I want to bring religion into the concert hall. Do you see? If Mohammed won't come to the mountain, the mountain must go to Mohammed."

As he climbed the steps to the platform, he felt the warmth and sympathy of the members of the orchestra. In this, the greatest test of his life, at least he was not alone. He glanced toward the audience which could not yet see him, and he noted the magnificence of the crowded hall. The very colors dazzled his eyes. The women wore evening gowns of all shades: white and black, many variations of blue, pale lemon and flaming orange. Some of the men wore uniforms and their sabres glittered as though studded with diamonds.

An attendant stepped forward and announced the change in program, mentioning only that Herr Spat, the scheduled conductor, was ill. There were a few explanations whose nature Toni could not define, and then it was time for him to take his place on the podium. He took a step or two, then the muscles of his legs stiffened with fear and it seemed impossible to go on. At that very moment was heard the first rumble of the oncoming applause. Toni seemed to be carried across the stage on the crest of this swelling wave of sound. He proceeded as easily now as though he were strolling on the Ringstrasse. Feeling returned to his body and his blood started to pulsate again. The musicians felt the change too and looked at him confidently as he raised his baton.

The trumpets opened the theme. Restrained at first, then more and more certain, they called out from the dominant: "We are leading on the right path!" A countermotif mirrored the pleasures of this world. It smiled and coaxed and wooed. It vanished in murmuring depths only to raise its beautiful head again in competition with the rocky main

theme. Gradually it lost its stubborn character and turned into a song which flutes carried away into the air. Far, far away.

In the auditorium, Gollinger, Toni's self-ordained biographer, registered his impression, his face screwed up in affectionate concern. In the first rows, in the boxes, and on the gilded chairs, sat the *Haute Volée,* connoisseurs of food and wine whose financial and social successes had seemingly convinced them that they were also connoisseurs of music. Indifferent, mundane ladies were attending the concert only because it was considered one of the social events of the season. Lovers of classical music who had sat waiting, eyes closed and a dreamy smile on their lips, in recollection of past musical enjoyments, raised their heads at the sound of the unusual harmonies. "Herr Bruckner," Gollinger wrote in his book, "knows nothing of what is going on behind his back. Remote from the world of men, he is in the enchanted realm of music."

The violas sang now in high, joyous tones, like girls hiking through the woods on a glorious Sunday morning; the violins wooed them in full, rich tones, while the French horn hummed memories like one who in his old age thinks back to youth and love. A whole garden of side themes began to sprout, then rich rhythms emphasized the main theme.

"Herr Bruckner, whom they call an impotent Roman, a simple, almost stupid organist, is in fact a secret king, pouring out his riches as few have ever done," Gollinger scribbled.

Jubilant octave units introduced a choral theme: Have

faith! The arms of the Lord are open! Then the main theme, born anew, emerged from the depth of E minor and in the voice of the trombone sent out waves of transcendental sounds. Before this sacred sea of music the God-seeker halted in hushed awe; his heart alone cried out with the flutes: Miserere!

What would happen now? The Bruckner-lovers bit their lips nervously, while the larger number of his opponents exchanged quick deprecating glances. The main motif came up out of the depths of the symphony. For an instant it seemed flooded by a flash of bright light. It grew and swelled: "God is Alpha and Omega."

An anxious question quivered through the orchestra. Will it accomplish its great task? A motif, mild and filled with human emotions, opened like a deep green valley. In response, the wind instruments raised their voices in a powerful hymn. The orchestra had arrived at the crossroads. The peak could be reached by only one power—the power of the spirit. The trumpets praised, the wind instruments implored. The tension redoubled when the pulsations of celestial violins were heard. Then, unexpectedly and at avalanche speed, the orchestra stumbled down into dark, terrible depths. Its ardor had not sufficed. The struggle must continue.

"Say, what's going on?" Gollinger's neighbor asked him, sneering at what he could not understand. "What does that noisy fool want with that kind of music?"

Gollinger frantically shook his head, showing that he had no desire to speak.

"Incidentally, your friend, the conducting composer, used a few tonic notes toward the end, borrowed, of course, from Haydn," Gollinger's neighbor snapped. Here and there a few bold auditors began to hiss and it was not altogether clear whether their displeasure was caused by the disturbance or by the music.

Unaware of the divided reaction, Toni lifted his baton, trying, with his Adagio, to find a new path to God. Very softly, a quartet of strings began to sing the praises of the Lord. In the auditorium, the undercurrent of dissenting voices subsided, as the basses sank into the pianissimo of deepest worship. The French horn cried out in longing, then all the voices together urged the sinner toward God.

"Say!" Gollinger's neighbor spoke in a hoarse whisper. "I thought Bruckner disliked program music. I'll be damned if I don't hear a program in that."

"It's themes, nothing but themes," Gollinger scribbled on a piece of paper for his neighbor's benefit, "the good old device of themes he uses to build his great symphony of faith."

"Faith!" His neighbor chuckled, and, for the first time, Gollinger looked at him and was surprised at what he saw. He had expected the washed-out face of a callous youth or the analytical eye of the music critic. This man, however, looked like the young crowd in the Wagner Club. To top it all, he was holding a volume of Brahms' *Lieder* on his knees. No doubt, he was a progressive musician himself, but carrying the standard for another type of modern composer. Possibly, he would have liked to belong to the Young Wag-

nerian Group, but resented that no one had asked him to join.

"I guess Bruckner has a lot of faith himself," the young Brahms lover said and Gollinger's smile froze when he went on, "at least faith in his audience, whose ears he shocks the whole evening long with his most unpleasant intervals."

It seemed to Toni that his orchestra was beginning to grow listless and he made every effort to win it back. The orchestra men were his allies. He needed them to penetrate and to hold the minds of his listeners. Swinging his baton, he coaxed and threatened them, and, at once, they responded and, in renewed ecstasy, poured out a shower of fresh spiritual colors. Gritting his teeth, to suppress his grief for Franz, Toni gave himself entirely to his purpose of offering his audience something worthwhile to absorb and to cherish, and by doing so, to bring them nearer to God.

In the Scherzo the violins sought new magical sounds to portray the gaiety of youth. The main theme marched along with heavy steps and a soft gay dance tune whirled about it. The two themes moved in undisturbed bliss, then the trumpets, in an excess of joy, dared the eagle flight to the dominant.

Toni felt above his work. The lightness of this Scherzo might seem as light labor to his listener, but nothing was more difficult than creating a simple and carefree melody.

"The Young Wagnerian Club is raving at the sparkling chains of trills, and, when the dance melody climbs up as gaily as a young boy climbs up a May-pole, they can hardly control their bliss," Gollinger wrote in his notebook. "Every-

one in the concert hall seems to be baffled and charmed, hearing a song theme in that key of joy: F Major. How natural this bold creation sounds. Bruckner knows no weariness in his finale. Where others might grow tired, he draws new strength from hidden sources. How daring a melodic, so full of polka élan! This part will undoubtedly become famous in the literature of music."

Now followed Toni's favorite measures: a serious choral theme shone forth like the early sun, and with it something deeply religious overflowed into the atmosphere. Toni, who knew its secret strength, piled upon it his sparkling pizzicati, his gay trills and runs. He felt that these measures were of such significance that they would remain with his listeners long after they had left the concert hall. He did not know that throughout the choral insertion the critics in their boxes had their eyes glued on their stop-watches, trying to measure in earthly minutes music that was intended to express God's timeless plan. Toni had returned to his carefree gaiety: 'Sell my clothes, I'm off for heaven!' the Viennese like to say, but somehow, in the midst of all his frolicking, he became aware of his own lowliness: In the midst of life we are in death.

The audience meanwhile had divined the opinion of the experts and if they were stirred by this portrait of a struggling soul, they tried to hide their emotions by a display of boredom or pert wit. "Isn't he imitating Beethoven a great deal?" "Oh, there's a bit of Schubert too, a bit of everyone in fact." The remarks were followed by a yawn. "And I wonder who's going to carry away all the dead notes, all

those murdered fifths?" Someone who had perhaps read one or two articles on music in the Sunday "Presse" was trying to impress the ladies he escorted and their giggles rewarded his efforts.

"What a medley of notes and sound-pictures!" Gollinger's neighbor spoke in a loud voice. Then he stood up and started to leave the hall, forcing several persons to rise. Gollinger lost his temper.

"If Brahms had written this symphony you'd rave about it!" he hissed.

Toni, though he learned only after the concert of this regrettable incident, had an unbearable sense of endangered mission. It's Franz's death which has upset me so and which hampers my capacity for concentration, he thought. Why am I so weak? What is death but a freeing of the soul so that it may soar up and meet Our Lord in heaven. With inflexible determination he set out to make his last ascent. Everything that did not speak of the Divine was carefully eliminated so that the Finale stood immaculate like a Gothic church in the ancient security of the faith. But behind him, rows and rows of auditors left, following the catastrophic example of one dissenter.

Revelling in D Major bliss, happy that once again the circle was closed, Toni did not notice that the attendants were hurriedly carrying away a laurel wreath which Toni's students had rashly brought to the steps of the stage, where Toni just ended his concert, uniting all voices in the orchestra in one giant voice: Deo Soli Gloria!

For a moment Toni stood transfixed. Then he became

aware of the lack of applause. On the platform before him, the musicians started to pack their instruments, fleeing the podium as criminals flee the scene of their crime. Toni was seized by a disturbing sense of unreality as if he were in a world of which he was the sole inhabitant. Puzzled, he passed his hand over his forehead. This strange lack of sound . . . except for the never halting rhythm of departing feet.

Slowly he turned around. The hall was almost deserted. Several of his students were hurrying toward the stage. Schaller was carrying Toni's big black hat. Enlightenment broke over Toni belatedly. This was worse than death, he thought. Death was a cleavage between body and soul, but this fiasco was murdering his soul itself.

"Leave me alone, boys," he cried in despair. He tore his hat from Schaller's hands and, pulling it down over his close-cropped hair, he said in desperation: "They don't want me. They don't want to hear my music."

"They don't understand you yet," his students tried to console him. "They will have to hear your music more often. They really liked it. We know they did. They just don't have the courage of their convictions."

"It's all over," Toni said. Sadly he gathered his notes together and made for the corridor. These young men don't really want to stay with me either, he thought. They're doing it out of kindness. They're surely ashamed to be seen with me.

He walked on quickly, hoping they would not follow. It is better for them, he thought. They will become more detached, more self-reliant. They needed this shock. Never-

theless it hurt him terribly to have disappointed them, because he loved them so much. Too much really, he told himself. One should not become so deeply attached to anyone on this earth. It's God alone Whom we should love with all our hearts.

"Herr Bruckner!" A complete stranger broke in upon Toni's thoughts. "May I speak with you for a minute?"

Toni looked at the man sadly. What could he want? What could anyone want or expect from one like himself?

"I want to tell you that I was most deeply impressed by your symphony. I had heard it before, having managed to slip in at your rehearsals. I want to publish this symphony, Herr Bruckner. Here is my card. Will you favor me with your manuscript?"

"Publish?" Toni repeated, his eyes round with amazement.

"Publish!" his students cried out behind him. "Herr Bruckner, did you hear? He said *publish!*"

"But I can't let you have the manuscript," Toni said. "I haven't a single copy of it."

"I'll take great care of the original, Herr Bruckner. Not one page will be lost."

"No copy?" Schaller said, puzzled. "Have you forgotten all the copying Kisch, my brother, and I have done for you? We have copies aplenty, and a piano transcript too."

"Why, so you have," Toni said and his voice trembled a little. "Why then, Herr . . ." he looked down at the card in his hand, "Herr Rättig, please, go right ahead and publish the symphony. Publish . . ." he repeated slowly, testing the word on his tongue and shaking his head. As he handed the

manuscript to Rättig he began feeling guilty. "You're quite sure you want to do this? Please, do think it over once more," he said urgently. "You might not sell one single copy and I couldn't . . . I mean, I haven't any money, you know."

Rättig smiled. "Don't you worry, Herr Bruckner. I'm a businessman and I'm not making this offer out of charity. I'm absolutely convinced that your music will be recognized. Look at Richard Wagner! His Tannhäuser was performed in the suburbs, his Lohengrin—or better, fragments of it—in an afternoon concert. Yet, slowly the public is catching on. They'll come around to appreciate your art too."

"If you should change your mind, I won't hold you to any promise," Toni said gravely.

"Why, that's nice of you," the publisher said and, as they shook hands, both of them were beaming.

Followed by his students, Toni walked toward the exit. In front of the concert-house, a woman stood waiting. She was tall and somewhat stout, with a proud carriage and a fine narrow head. For a second Toni thought he recognized her, but how would he know such an elegant lady—or any lady for that matter? He laughed a little to himself. His sister, Nanny, and the young girls at St. Anna's were all the feminine acquaintances he had. Nevertheless, the lady came directly toward him.

"Toni," she said in a full alto voice, "don't you remember me?"

Toni hesitated, then he asked, unbelievingly, "You aren't Barbara Richter, are you?"

She smiled at him and her whole face lit up. "So you do recognize me after all these years."

"What happened to you, Barbara? What are you doing? With whom are you . . . ?" He had asked all these questions in rapid succession and, at the last, he stopped and flushed deeply.

"With whom I'm living?" she laughed lightly. "Alone, Toni, believe it or not."

"I didn't mean to . . ." he stammered.

"I know what you meant. You wanted to know if I had a family, if I was married—if I was happy. Being the nice person you are, you wanted to know all that about an old friend." Her face was full of warmth and her eyes were peaceful. "I'm living in Bayreuth," she told him. "Austria is for dreamers, Germany is for persons who want to get ahead. You see, we two would never have fitted into the same background." She turned around and addressed Toni's students who were grouped a little embarrassedly under a gas lantern. "Don't go away," she said to them, "I'll only take a minute of Herr Bruckner's time."

The boys seemed excited by Barbara's presence. Murmuring curiously, they threw shy, sidewise glances at her. Then the young Schaller came over and, crushing his hat in his hands, his eyes shining behind their thick glasses, he said: "Would you mind giving me your autograph, Madame Hibarra?"

"Hibarra! You are the Hibarra?" Toni cried.

She laughed merrily. "Don't you remember all the little games we used to play at school with Miss Greti? One of them was crossing out the letters our names had in common with the name of the person we liked best."

"That was an afterschool game, Barbara," Toni said

quickly, memories of their youth together in Ansfelden arousing in him an echo of his old emotions.

"Never mind that," Barbara said with some of her familiar carefree gaiety. "The name 'Hibarra' is my own arrangement of the letters remaining in my name after striking out the similar ones in yours."

"So you really are a famous personage! You are Madame Hibarra!" Toni said and he felt as though bells were ringing in his heart. Barbara had become the famous Bayreuth singer—singing for Toni's idol, for the master, Richard Wagner!

"Yes, I reached my goal," Barbara said, "with the assistance of some good, strong vocal chords and that little push you gave me that night in Linz." She looked down at herself and shook her head in mock despair. "And a few extra pounds that I needed for volume." She took his arm. "But I didn't come here to talk about myself. I'm going back to Bayreuth to-morrow, anyway. But there is something I must show you."

Toni saw her beckon to a coachman who sat dreamily watching her from his high seat. "Don't you want to give your autograph to this young man?" Toni asked, pointing to Schaller, and she signed her name quickly, smiling her old, winning smile.

The horses drew up in front of them; the footman stepped down and opened the door.

"Help me get the picture out," Barbara told him. "It's too big for me to handle alone."

Toni looked on, puzzled, as Barbara, helped by her ser-

vant, pulled out a large picture from the carriage and had the footman carry it under the gas lamp. But even with the flickering light showing upon it, the picture, crusted with black mold, revealed absolutely nothing.

What did Barbara want with this picture? Why had she come all the way from Germany to show it to him?

"I don't understand . . . I don't see . . ." Toni began helplessly and his students, standing around them, shook their heads too in bewilderment.

Barbara laughed her deep throaty laughter, a hint of that powerful singing voice in her chest. "This is Makart's famous portrait of the King's entrance into Antwerp," she announced. "Remember all those beautiful naked women? Well, they're all gone. Nothing is recognizable. It's no longer a picture, only a symbol of decay."

"The colors couldn't stand humidity, I guess," Toni said, puzzled.

"The whole thing wasn't any good," Barbara said. She gave the picture a little push with her pointed shoe and it rolled over and fell, painting downward, into the gutter.

"That's where to-morrow's newspaper criticism will end up too," Kisch said with the same sureness with which Billy Merle had made the statement once before.

Barbara looked briefly up at Bruckner and smiled. "But your work, Toni, will never die. Composed for God, it will remain in His keeping."

She gave a friendly nod to the little gathering, then stepped into her carriage and out of Toni's life.

III.

4.

Toni wished Nanny would not worry so much about him, especially when he was working. She was, of course, most considerate, always waiting for him to lay his pencil down before daring to address him. It was not her fault that the kitchen door squeaked every time she peeped in, nor could she know that the actual writing was not the most important part of his composing. Sometimes Toni was so engrossed in his work that he did not even notice her various methods of approach, but when, as to-day, he found it hard to concentrate, and when, to top it all, she sighed and crackled a newspaper every time she passed him, then it was Nanny who gained the upper hand in the silent struggle.

"Anything wrong?" Toni asked.

"Nothing, oh nothing," Nanny said, and her unusual reserve told Toni that it must be something rather out of the ordinary to upset her so. "I was just wondering." She leaned tentatively against his table.

"Sometimes you look just like mother," he said, pulling her down on a chair beside him.

"You really think so?" she asked shyly, her heart rejoicing with the thought of motherliness.

"Of course, I do," Toni told her, but he could not help thinking that, though Nanny's features resembled Frau Bruckner's, her face would never have quite the same expression, for their mother's anxiety had always been just a

thin veneer, covering her confidence and hope. And it was not Frau Bruckner's deep trust in God alone, but her optimism, her reliance upon fate, that made her so strong. Nothing could happen, she felt, because if it did, it would break her heart, and who would want to break a mother's heart?

"You are so gentle," Nanny suddenly burst into Toni's reflections. "Why do you have to compose things that have such fury in them?"

Toni sensed the despair behind her simple question. He was everything to her, her baby, her hero—the one man in her life. He hardly knew how to explain to her that he was a nobody, a nothing, a mere recipient for the waves of sound coming to him from the spheres, and that he had no right to modify them in any way.

"Couldn't you write differently? Couldn't you compose waltzes like Johann Strauss?" she asked, and her voice shook a little with the fear that she might hurt him with her questions. "It would be simple, I'm sure, for anyone as gifted as you," she said encouragingly. "Just three beats to a measure and the music goes right to people's hearts."

"Johann Strauss," Toni repeated thoughtfully, for he loved and envied the 'king of the waltz.' "No, Nanny, I can't write like him. It's not just a matter of measures and beats." Seeing her disappointment in her eyes, he began softly to stroke her hair. "Poor Nannerl," he said.

She gave him a stricken look. "Well, I suppose it's your own business, Toni. You must know what you're doing."

Toni told her then what the Bishop had said to him. It is God's business, not our own, we are here to do.

Nanny sat silent for a moment. Then she sighed. "It's very difficult to be a Christian. There seem to be so many rules."

"There are quite a few," Toni admitted. "But there are also compensations."

"I know," she said, "but I wish there were even more compensations in this world."

"There are plenty."

"Like this?" she jumped at him, pulling out a carefully folded newspaper from her apron pocket.

Well, Nanny had finally taken her courage in both her hands and was about to show him what was upsetting her so. What a timid little thing she really was! He smoothed out the paper and began to read:

"Bruckner's last composition resembles the work of a drunkard," it began, and then followed a list of the crimes he was accused of committing against music.

"Do you really put in a rest whenever you don't know how to go on?" Nanny asked him, her face full of concern.

He gave a short laugh. "Don't you remember, Nanny, how father used to teach us always to take a deep breath before we had something really important to say?"

"That was ages and ages ago," Nanny said. "To-day people haven't all the time they used to have. Life is running on and on, and we are just being swept along with it."

"Well, I'm not." Toni stared out of the window. The sky gave off a golden glow and it seemed to him that he was receiving a message from somewhere beyond this brilliant expanse. He could feel God's summons quite distinctly. Smiling, he turned back to Nanny. "Now the sequences are another thing to which the critics object. But don't you

ever repeat anything to make sure you are understood or because what you have said is interesting?"

Nanny's plain face revealed her efforts to understand him. Since he had spoken of their father, she was trying to make more associations with the world she had known. Sounds of home seemed to come back to her; gaily clipped dance measures, repeated over and over; the monotonous, yet swinging voice of the church bells. For a while her thoughts were of home and the past. Then again she frowned with anxiety, peering at the paper before them, in which the slowness with which Toni developed his themes was being attacked in biting tones. As though it were possible to enter the realm of the Lord with hurried steps, Toni thought, shaking his head.

"We even had the pleasure of finding ourselves face to face with God Almighty," the critics said, "the composer generously allowing twenty-eight minutes for the big event."

Toni had to find words of explanation, because he knew that his sister wanted to defend him, that she wished to be proud of the man, who was her brother, her love, her everything. He began to speak of the Austrian mountains; he told her that one who had lived among them could not portray small insignificant hills, but felt compelled to express himself in broad lines, sharp peaks and deep quiet valleys. Nanny's face did not change but a sort of peace came over it, and, after a while, her questions seemed to be dictated less by a tortured heart than by a clear, inquisitive mind.

"It says here: 'Why the frequent change from minor to major . . .?' "

"It's a matter of illumination, of color, of hue. I never

quite know where life is more beautiful in its tender or in its heroic moods."

"And the unisons?" she pointed out a paragraph with her work-worn finger. "Here they say that when you can't find a greater variety of notes you just let all the voices melt into one."

He had to go through it all. He told her of the unisons in life: the unity of feeling among people who have the same goal. He reminded her of the mountain climbers sharing the common will to conquest and victory, and of the enthusiasm of an excited crowd, shouting, "Hosannah, hosannah!"

Nanny was looking up at him with her hands twisted in her lap as the teacher in him came to life, and he went, sentence by sentence, through the cruel editorial. "The adagios are too simple." Why, if one has a complicated plot, naturally one can't go into descriptive details, and if the heart is full of love for God, it has no room for any other emotion. "It's all a matter of feeling. People who know and acknowledge only the world of real things, find this hard to understand," Toni ended his little lecture, but he held his head slightly inclined, listening, as he always did, for a phrase of music from space, and, when none came, his old doubts returned to him and all his heart's devotion seemed to be invested with sheer vanity. Nanny, however, full of good intentions, rose, clutching the paper to her breast, and Toni knew that she was going to learn the article by heart, and return shyly again and again to ask him questions in a roundabout way until his explanations were as firmly anchored in her mind as the attacks against him.

Toni sat down at his organ. Tenderly, he touched the stops, one by one; then, settling himself more comfortably upon the bench, he started a quiet prelude to soothe his agitation. This time Nanny came bursting into the room with her eyes fairly popping out of her head. "Look!" she shouted, "just look what they have written in the second column! Oh why didn't they say all these nice things about your music in the first article?"

Line by line, Toni scanned the flattering criticism. 'Bruckner's Seventh Symphony, which has already made a triumphant tour of Germany, was finally brought before the Viennese public . . . profound admiration . . . handkerchiefs were waving . . . laurel wreaths were carried to the stage . . . an enthusiastic audience shouted and stamped its feet . . . the structure of the symphony broad and beautiful in the Doric style Bruckner learned to admire back in St. Florian . . .'

"You see?" Nanny said, and the challenge in her face was really meant for their next-door neighbor to whom she ran without further delay.

With a little sigh Toni left the organ. His mind was a blank, his heart utterly empty, no gentle murmur of musical voices filled his ears. A minute ago he had thought of himself as the missionary of a creed that seemed ridiculous to a great part of the world and he had felt somewhat sorry for himself. Now, when he could not catch the tonal waves which were his only link with his fellow-men, all things around him suddenly lost their meaning.

He walked toward the table and scrutinized the work he had recently completed. He had so hoped to proceed with

his eighth symphony. That afternoon in Klosterneuburg he had all the themes in his head. Now all that was left was the German Michael theme—the motif of the dreamer with the sword. Toni loved this theme and, before he left for a walk, he covered his work as carefully as a father would protect his child from draughts.

As he walked along toward the Stadt Park, he was busy with his own thoughts. He was suddenly very sorry that he had no family of his own. A good marriage would also have been a way to eternity. He might have married a friendly, gentle girl, and lived with her in humble happiness. A longing came over him to put aside his hopeless work and turn to the sweetness of love and companionship. How often had he wished for the touch of a tender hand, the encouragement of a comforting arm around his shoulders! Surely, he was not yet too old to marry. Why should he not enter this other world, a world with its own rights, its own duties and its own ambitions. He had believed that the ultimate fate of so many depended on him; his aim had been to raise them above themselves through the spiritual help of his music. Oh, if he had only realized all that he had given up in the belief that nothing mattered save his high goal. To think that his music had meant no more to the world than the bottom of the sea!

Outside, twilight was falling. In the Stadt Park, the air smelled of cool brown earth and of rain, scented with the perfume of jasmine. Nurses were hurrying toward the Ringstrasse, pushing neat baby carriages before them. Toni thought of the children he might have had, and of all the things he might have given them: the gay harvest dances, the

beauty of twilight in a Gothic cathedral, the baroque charm of the ancient castles and monasteries, and true Catholicism full of light and joy. He remembered his own childhood in Ansfelden, when he had sometimes gone out at night with the priest and had had a glimpse of the great peace enjoyed by those who died in the arms of the Church.

Upon the park benches couples were sitting, whispering and kissing, and upon them a misty ring of gaslight lay like a magic halo. From the Cursalon came, faint and low, the music of the Blue Danube Waltz. Toni glanced at the faces about him and found them happy and peaceful. All the thoughtless, egotistical striving for fun and excitement was gone from their features, and the superficial gaiety was replaced by an expression of contented, even blissful repose. Toni did not doubt but that this magical transfiguration had been brought about by music, a music with only three bars to a measure! Nanny, with all the simpleness of her nature, had put her finger on a truly sore spot!

For a while Toni felt quite depressed. He had had such big plans to serve God and comparatively little had come of them. By means of his concert tours he had meant, through his music, to reveal all the blessings men in their blindness are so ready to squander. Well, in this respect he had not done too badly. But in the second assignment he had given himself, he had failed miserably. His symphonies which were meant to inspire young composers had been misunderstood and misinterpreted by them. His idea of making the concert hall into a cathedral because music, begun in the Church and protected by the Church, should therefore return to the

Church and through her to God—this idea had been laughed at. And in his third field of endeavor, the teaching of music, he had quite frankly made a mess of things. Why, he was not even allowed to approach the students at the University—the potential intellectual leaders of Austria.

The thought that he had been refused as a professor at the University cut Toni deeply and was perhaps the reason for his inability to compose to-day. He thought with embarrassment and shame of the probable reason for his rejection. He had learned indirectly that he had misspelled a word in his letter of application, and had since been haunted by a depressing sense of failure. He could not blame the president of the University for denying the position to one who could not write a simple letter without an error. He might have told the professorial committee that during the past few years his entire effort had been devoted to collecting material, both emotional and spiritual, for use in his compositions. He had never even opened a book, and surely they realized that German spelling rules were constantly changing. But even the fact that he had found an excuse for his failures did not make him feel any less miserable.

Toni had never felt so alone as he did now in the park. And yet there was so much love all about him. He longed for communion with humanity. Only because he had been so different from other persons had they refused him a share in their joys. He wanted to tell them that he had never had anything against them, except their indifference which held them back from the way to God. He looked pleadingly about him, but there was no sign of response. "Isn't there anyone

for me?" he cried. He felt as though he were fated to walk all alone through the world.

He thought of the young girls with whom he had fallen in love and who, one after another, had married, not knowing that he had cared about them. He thought of his own feeling for them which had not been enough. One small flame had destroyed the other, and they all had been smothered by the weight of his creative power. Music had been his life, his sacrifice and his only way of offering himself. And his music had been directed toward God. In fact, throughout his existence, only with God had he not felt lonely.

Above him the sky was a dark vault, but beyond it the light sparkled. Waves and waves of tones descended to him, modulations in minor and major keys, the purest of sounds, waking a tumult of emotions in his soul. The gentle murmur of loving voices mingled with the music. A tide of love for all his fellow-men rose in Toni's heart. They are God's children, he thought. They are good and pure. Only their philosophy of life is wrong, and what comes about through it is bad. But they are not too strongly attached to their beliefs. It should not be difficult to persuade them to take a step toward the heavenly goal. And once they take the first step, they will be carried along by their own momentum.

As Toni climbed the steep stairs to his flat, he heard Nanny talking, and from the loud tone of her voice he gathered that she was unhappy. He knew that she was unhappy when she had to hurt somebody's feelings. Perhaps it was Poldi Heller again trying to force her way into his house against his express wishes. How could she possibly expect

him to receive a married woman? Only a year ago she had been so young and sweet and innocent that he could never pass her father's grocery store without waving his hat to her. But she had had no eyes for Toni who had neither money nor youth to offer her, but just a tender, loving heart. Now, she was bored and in search of entertainment.

Toni had always felt the attraction of young girls. They wanted so much, and expected so much, and he had so much to give. Their ready enthusiasm enchanted him and their sudden utter despair touched his heart. Life to them was still a mystery and he wished he might be chosen to unveil its beauty, a beauty as shining and pure as the sky on a Sunday morning in spring. Because he was no longer young he could tell them that pain was less fearsome than they thought, and, if it tore their hearts it was only to make room for greater joy.

"What would you get out of it?" Toni could hear Nanny say, "Just look at these walls—dark-blue, without any brightness whatsoever. He doesn't notice it. He doesn't care."

"That's why he needs someone to brighten up his life," another female voice came through the door. "If I were his wife, I'd paint those walls a canary-yellow so they would shine as bright as the sun, and I'd have flowers at all the windows, crimson geraniums in green boxes."

"That could be done, of course," Nanny said, taking a deep breath that sounded almost like a sigh. Poor Nannerl, he could imagine her soft brown eyes full of contrition. Why hadn't she thought of that herself?

Toni had not the slightest idea who this purposeful visitor

might be. Her voice brought before his eyes the fleeting picture of a young maid who had taken care of him when he had come down with a bad cold and a fever in Berlin. He had been forced to miss his concert then, and the girl had tried to cheer him up. It had been touching how in her simple way she had succeeded in entertaining him, and, in addition, she had proved a most competent nurse. It would be wonderful, if unthinkable, if she had fallen in love with him, now, when he was so longing to give of his tenderness, love and understanding.

I shall marry, after all, he thought. I shall marry and have children. He would return to the country. The city was no place to bring up children. Oh, how wonderful it would be to go to midnight mass on Christmas Eve, the village almost buried in snow, on each side of him a child, their little feet restless and hopping, their eyes deep and full of wonder. How lovely they would look in the Easter procession, bearing a holy statue between them, walking gravely, one hand upon the heart, over the cobble stones strewn with grass. Hosannah!

He opened the apartment door and he saw Nanny and, wonderful to relate, that young German girl of whom he had been thinking. They were happily exchanging cooking recipes. They would get along well with each other. This pleased Toni because Nanny had been a faithful companion and Toni would not have liked to send her away.

The young girl smiled brightly at Toni. Then she blushed and her blushing made her even lovelier. "Herr Bruckner!" she cried and for an awful moment he thought she was go-

ing to kiss his hand. "I came to tell you that I have fought it out with my parents and now they have agreed to our marriage."

Toni's joy was so great that he forgot to be surprised. This beautiful young creature wanted to share his life. This healthy, clean young girl wished to become his wife. For a second, everything seemed to spin before his eyes. He gazed anxiously at her as though she might suddenly disappear into thin air.

"Well, won't you say anything?" she asked nervously.

"I'm happy, so very, very happy," Toni said. "I can hardly tell you how happy I am."

"This is an occasion that calls for a celebration," Nanny said bravely, although her voice shook ever so little. "How good that I have a nice piece of meat and we can also have the cake I baked for to-morrow."

Toni took a deep breath. It seemed to him that the moment had come to take the young lady into his arms. But she turned away from him and was busily assisting Nanny, an expression of embarrassment on her face.

Toni had been quite ill in Berlin, he remembered, but now he recalled that even then this girl had offered to marry him, without however being willing to give up her Protestant faith. Her faith, she had declared, was newer than the Catholic creed, and therefore better and more up-to-date. He would teach her, Toni resolved. He would have the happiness of introducing her into his Church, of giving her the knowledge of God and his understanding of God's love.

Later, as they sat together around the table, the girl—Lina

was her name—began to look more at ease, as though she felt she belonged. Toni, with his arm about her shoulders, was talking away happily. Across the table, Nanny sat with a serene and resigned expression on her dear face.

"Could you have cooked this dinner?" Nanny asked Lina, looking suddenly anxious.

"I doubt it very much," Lina said. "I don't like to cook, you know. I've always worked as a maid."

This was wonderful. The two women would get along beautifully, and Lina most certainly had shown tact. But, somehow, Toni suddenly grew quite tense with a premonition of disaster. What would he do if Lina refused to accept his religion? What if she insisted on giving his children the Protestant education she had received in her own childhood? There she sat beside him so utterly lovely, her soft blond hair brushing lightly against his skin, as though returning the loving pressure of his hand upon her shoulder. He tried to think of her in a Gothic cathedral when the candles were burning and the organ pealing. Somehow she did not fit into this picture. He wondered which he loved more, this woman or the Church. He was unable to think too clearly, but he knew that he had always loved the Church very much.

After dinner, Nanny tactfully left the two of them together. For a while they were so silent that Toni thought he heard the fluttering of the girl's heart. He was hardly able to control his feelings for her. It would not be fair, however, to kiss her before everything—or at least the most important question between them—had been settled. He understood what was going on inside this sweet young creature beside

him. He had so often read the thoughts of young, innocent girls, he understood their hopes, their disappointments, their schemings—more transparent than cobwebs—and he was acquainted with all the episodes of the emotional growth from the child into the woman. He had often watched them with tender, protective eyes.

"Herr Bruckner," Lina said, suddenly, softly. "There's just one thing you must understand. I can never become a Catholic. I just cannot have you or anyone else teach me that antiquated religion. I have told you this before."

"I shall not teach you," Toni said. "It will not be necessary. The knowledge of the real faith already lies in you, though half asleep. You need not listen to me, only to my music. It will be like a fountain from which you can drink, or like a tree whose fruits you can enjoy."

She got up slowly and looked at him sadly. "I'm sorry, Herr Bruckner, but if you intend to use your music to make me break the only promise my parents requested of me, then I won't listen to any of it."

As she turned to go, Toni seemed to suffer more deeply than ever before in his life. It was more than mental anguish. His heart hurt him with a sharp, almost physical pain. He had never thought a heart could hurt so much. For a short while he had been led to believe that he, too, would share in the joys of nature, yet be able to keep the spirit of God in his union with his wife. Everything in Lina attracted him: her rosy skin, her full red lips, her broad hips that moved with a soft rhythm, her bearing which was proud and erect as though she were wearing an invisible crown on

her fine blond head. He had always known this longing for a woman which might have been fulfilled with this girl. But he could not marry her. He would have to go on alone. It was his mind that made the decision, and, though his heart overflowed with the bitterness of his sacrifice, it obeyed.

"Good-bye, Toni," Lina's eyes filled with tears. "I haven't ever met anyone as good as you—as kind. I think it was your kindness more than anything else that drew me to you. But you are hard and unshakable when it comes to your obsession—God. Who is God? Nobody has ever seen Him. How can you be so sure He exists? Why must you give up everything for Him?"

"I have never doubted His existence," Toni said. "The only doubt I have ever had was whether I was His worthy instrument."

* * *

The next days passed monotonously. When Toni was able to compose, he did not think of Lina. But when the voices from the spheres were silent, he missed her very much and at times his longing for her was so great that he could scarcely bear it. "Give me a sign that I did right, O My God," he prayed, and quickly added, "But not my will be done, but Thine."

And then, one day, Toni knew that God had heard his prayer because he was able to say joyfully and yet in modest pride: "The Lord likes me. I know He does."

About a week after that day when unexpected bliss had turned into deep sorrow, Toni received an invitation to go to the University. This, he told himself, could mean only

one thing: he had been accepted, he would be able to teach receptive young people who would go out and spread throughout the world the knowledge he had imparted to them. Isn't it strange, he thought, that joy and grief are so closely united, that they seem like waves floating over you, carrying you along, now up, now down. If you look deep into your heart, you will find that you could never have felt such great joy, if sorrow had not preceded it.

As Toni crossed the Ringstrasse and approached the University, he started to realize that this occasion was somehow to be altogether different from what he had expected. There were students crowding the staircase and the entrance to the hall, dressed in their Sunday best which was so different from their untidy everyday clothes. Some of them recognized him and shouted: "Here he comes!" And a few of them ran inside as though to announce his arrival. Toni swallowed hard with emotion and stage fright. He wished he had followed Nanny's advice and bought a dress suit for this occasion. He had one made to his order from good waterproof gray flannel, but his sister had not allowed him to wear it for fear that he would be laughed at as had happened once before. Then, too, he hated the stiff white front of a dress suit which hardly permitted him to breathe.

A group of students and a few professors Toni knew walked up the stairs. He joined them, carrying his latest composition, his *Te Deum,* as final proof of his ability, under his arm. As they crossed the entrance hall, Toni watched the young people who lined the walls. He reproached himself for not having prepared a speech, for

thinking only of his music. He wanted so badly to reach these men and boys, to make them like and trust him. Perhaps he could still think of something to say. Ah, but there was Exner, the Rector! Toni stopped respectfully, envying the professors who had the courage and the right to gather around him and receive of his wisdom. But it was to him that the Rector turned.

"This way, please, Herr Bruckner!" he called.

Toni could hardly believe his ears. Slowly he made his way through the crowd, bowing all the time, afraid the Rector might not have seen his greeting. To his surprise, the Rector, accompanied by the professors, came through the hall to meet him. Just as Toni stopped before him, someone gave a signal and the students' clear voices began to sing. Gaudeamus igitur . . . These fine young men! They were the future of Austria. They thought, of course, about dancing, joy and love, too, but above all they had ideals and a goal—or wished to have one. It would not be difficult to show them that in this world there is little happiness, but more than enough for all in heaven.

The Rector took Toni's arm and led him toward the auditorium. Then Toni found himself on the platform, high above the blurred figures of the students. Behind him, the professors had spread out to form a line along the wall. The Rector, in the center of the platform, was holding a scroll of paper, his gaze fixed on Toni whose cheeks burned like fire.

"I am proud to announce that the faculty of philosophy of the University of Vienna has decided to bestow upon Herr Anton Bruckner the degree of doctor, honoris causa."

Toni's face contorted in a spasm of emotion. He looked in front of him, seeking the figure of the Rector, but he could see only a dark silhouette that seemed to move up and down before his eyes. Then came a thunderous burst of sound. Toni had heard applause in London, Paris, Berlin, Switzerland and Czechoslovakia, but never before had he been so deeply moved by it. "Dear God, let me be worthy of their confidence. I would rather die than fail them. And failing them, would be failing You. Please, dear Lord, give me the power to guide them in the right way," he prayed.

"Won't you say a few words, Herr Bruckner?" the Rector asked.

Toni looked down at the rows and rows of students and before the warmth and expectation in their eyes, he found words, inspiring words about art and religion. "My life has one path, one definite path to follow. There can be no other," he ended, and his tone was serious and full of affection. Then he turned to the Rector and looked inquiringly into his face. Had his speech been all right? Or had he disgraced the University with the simple language of the country boy?

Exner gave him an encouraging nod. Then, in his turn, he spoke to the students, and ended his speech with a sentence that has since become famous: "Where science stops, where insurmountable barriers to factual thinking are set, there begins the realm of art which expresses the intangibles—the things which science cannot penetrate. I, the Rector of the University of Vienna, bow before the assistant teacher of Windhaag, Herr Anton Bruckner."

The applause grew in pace and volume. For a second Toni was shaken by a fit of trembling, then, slowly, he raised his folded hands. "I thank you, O God," he said.

"Gaudeamus igitur, juvenes dum sumus . . ."

Throughout the students' song, he continued to hold his hands in an attitude of prayer. He saw the light come into the young faces. It was God's will that moved in them; God's urge that transfigured them, he thought with conviction.

PART FOUR

Finale

Part Four

FINALE

Theme: . . . but he that doth the will of God abideth forever.

IV.

1.

It was a year now since the Emperor Franz Josef had honored Toni by giving him a permanent home in the Belvedere, the Prince Eugene Palace in the Third District of Vienna. From his window Toni could look out upon the verdant baroque park with its statues of heroes and poets. Now, in his old age, he was again surrounded by the style which he had come to love during his youth in St. Florian. No wonder he liked it here and felt at home.

Early in the morning, the park lay like a dream in mist and cool sunlight, and the fountains poured their waters into the moss-grown basins, drop after drop falling with its own musical sound. Later the happy shouts of the playing children would make the air alive and the low murmur of gossiping mothers would penetrate to Toni's room, monotonous and interminable, yet strangely enchanting, like the buzzing of bees in a flowering meadow.

It was a wonderful place to live out one's last years in peace, Toni told himself later as he opened another of Billy Merle's letters which, as usual, would attempt to lure him to America—that strange continent beyond the great ocean—and which, as usual, he was going to answer in the negative. But this letter was altogether different to the one Toni had expected, and, having read it, he walked to the window and looked out at the double row of shaped poplars which rose like pillars against the emerald-blue sky. His thoughts travelled faster than any ship could have carried him and he found himself in Cincinnati in a huge concert hall and he heard his *Te Deum,* this deep-felt hymn to God, and, even in him who had written it, it evoked a feeling of humble reverence.

In the clear vision that came to him in this moment, he seemed to see the large audience to which his music called out: Te Deum laudamus! and then in the fugue: In te Domine speravi! For a moment he relived the old doubts and difficulties of composition. Would his strength suffice to create a true hymn to God? Having begun with a climax, how was he going to enhance the ecstasy? He recalled how he had summoned all his knowledge of techniques acquired during the long and hard years of his apprenticeship with Sechter, Kitzler and his other teachers and how, with the sum of his contrapuntal experience, he had built his fugue. But not yet was he able to reach God's throne, nor hear the Almighty Voice. With trembling hands he had attempted to raise his music to a higher plane and then God must have helped him for never could his own feeble im-

agination have found a choral of a fervor such as only the early Christians had shown in their ancient chorals, and with this sacred song he had stormed heaven.

Toni smiled a little, thinking of the young Americans, boys outspoken and healthy like Billy Merle had been with not the slightest intention to render lip-service, yet often strangely hollow and superficial. Now, with his *Te Deum* firmly rooted among them, they would be reminded more often of God. Billy too—that handsome scoundrel. Toni laughed to himself, forgetting almost that Billy was no longer a youngster. Well, Toni did not have to go to America, after all, and he was glad. He had started on his last symphony and this time he would dedicate it to God Himself. Nothing could keep him from concentrating all his powers on his work.

Toni looked at the narrow gravel path glittering in the sun. How often in his life had he seen the road toward heaven as clear and shining. How often had he seen his goal before him when he had taken only the first wavering steps. In his Seventh Symphony he had begun with the portrait of the open sky. Now, growing old, he felt that heaven was very remote, indeed, and he realized that he had not done enough, not nearly enough to reach it. He began to sweat with anxiety. If God would only accept him! It was asking such a great deal! Too late, he had become aware that kindness, nothing but kindness, would lead you there. Where were his good deeds? What had he done to please the Lord?

How slow, how very slow the progress toward heaven, he had already shown in the first movement of his new sym-

phony. He had led the God-seekers through four outer courts so they might prepare themselves for their appearance before God Almighty. But when finally they had seen His Holy Face, It was wreathed in a fiery halo of thunderstorms which awed them into silence.

Toni pulled himself erect and wiped the sweat from his forehead. Time was so short and so much was at stake. He stared out at the park and then suddenly the appearance of a solitary figure seemed to free him of his despondency and, frowning, he concentrated on the man who walked with a wavering step, like one seriously ill, through the midday beauty. The wretched man, in a dirty coat that hung in rags from his emaciated shoulders, zigzagged along the garden path, then collapsed without any warning and lay helpless on the ground. Quickly, Toni turned toward the door, eager to run out and help, but Kati, his housekeeper, exhaling the sweet odor of buttered pancakes, stood on the threshold.

"Oh no," she shouted, "you aren't going out now, not when your lunch is ready. Who do you think you are that you can let my favorite dish go to waste?"

Toni meant to tell her that it was *his* favorite dish he was going to spoil and that this was none of her business, but he began at the beginning. "Who do I think I am? Well, that's a good one. I'm Anton Bruckner, the composer, honorary citizen of Ansfelden, organist at the Hofburg Chapel, and the possessor of a medal from His Majesty. Bah!" He made a face at Kati and tried to slip out of the house, but she had already planted herself squarely before the door leading to the garden, her firm round body bisected by the apron strings, a living barrier to overcome.

"So you are Bruckner, the composer," she said fiercely, "but I am Kati, your cook, and I can bake the best jelly doughnuts and the best pancakes in Vienna, and you know it!"

"I know, Katerl," he said in a placating voice, wishing, however, that he might be rid of her, and for that matter, of his secretary as well, and enjoy the freedom of action to which he had become used during his sister's lifetime. "I know all your good qualities, but I've got to go out."

"Oh no, you aren't going to spoil your appetite as usual in some coffeehouse," she said. "I won't have it."

Toni patted her shoulder, then unexpectedly gave her a quick little push and opened the door. Once outside, he walked rapidly in the quick agile way of his youth. He found the poor man sprawled on the ground, his jaw sagging, breathing deeply like one utterly exhausted. He tried to lift him, wincing as he shifted the heavy weight, because of the sharp pain stabbing his rheumatic leg.

Kati came hurrying along. "Now that's the most ridiculous thing you have ever done," she scolded, indignation still flaming in her eyes over the treatment he had just given her. Refusing her advice was one thing Kati could not stand. "Haven't you any smell in your nose? Can't you see the man is just full of alcohol?"

"Never mind," Toni said, still attempting to raise the man who somehow slipped out of his arms again and again like a badly wrapped parcel. "Aren't we just as sinful as he is?"

"Papperlapap," Kati sneered. "You'll never grow up." But she did help him lift the man who came to his senses as soon as he was on his feet.

"My heart," he stammered, putting a hand to his chest.

"You see!" Toni said to Kati. "It's his heart," he explained to the policeman who came hurrying along.

"Sure," the policeman said. "Sure it's his heart." And he laughed, tossing back his head.

"I suppose you'll come back for your pancakes now?" Kati said to Toni, her hands letting go of the sick man as though he were made of glowing coals.

Toni did not answer. "I'm coming with you," he said quietly to the policeman. "I want to make sure this man gets every possible care. Perhaps he should be taken to a hospital." The poor fellow who had fainted before his very eyes became a symbol to Toni, a page from the revealing story of neglected brotherly love. He himself had never done enough for his fellow-men, never, never. Look at all the poor people in the world! How many hours had he wasted that might have been spent at the bedside of a sick man, how often might he have read to a blind person, how many miles might he have guided a cripple. How God would have blessed him with melodies had he done some of these things.

The fatigue of the morning left Toni, as he swung into the narrow street across the Heumarkt in search of a cab. He gazed at the row of low houses, their windows framed in stucco leaves. Vienna was so magically beautiful. A low vibrant voice rose and fell like gentle surf in his brain. This last scherzo he was planning, how different it would be from the heavy scherzo of his seventh symphony in which forest giants seemed to play, throwing whole tree trunks at each other like fairy tale figures in Böcklin's paintings. Now,

finally, Toni had been taken in by Vienna's charm; at last he was able to feel this hushed musical undercurrent which stirred the spirit of everyone who passed through the narrow streets, who visited the old-fashioned market-places or sat in the fragrant public gardens. Each sound that floated past him was a musical note. He thrilled to the beat of the military band marching by, his blood tingling to its rhythm.

As he climbed into the carriage, the checked cloth that covered its bench gave out a musical note at the first touch of his fingers. The horses drew away from the curb and Toni sat enthralled at the thought that, because of his inner adjustment to Vienna, the scherzo and trio of his ninth symphony would become intermezzi of supreme gaiety. How many varied elements would be intermingled: the hoofs of the hurrying horses sweeping like Chopin's passages, piccolo lights skipping in the flutes, sleepy indifference grumbling pleasantly in the bassoon, and an easy melancholy singing its grief away on the muted violins.

The policeman was waiting at the entrance to the Belvedere Park, holding Toni's protégé who dangled in his grip like a marionette. They brought the man to the police station where, after having been comforted with hot coffee, he seemed to feel as good as new, much to Toni's surprise. Oh the kind Viennese! How human the policemen had been! Toni walked home happily. My brothers, he thought! My dear Viennese! And all the abundance of his love rushed into his brain in a surging flood of music.

When Toni reached home, he found a visitor, Wahler, his most gifted and famous student, waiting for him. Toni was

delighted to see him. Wahler was the bringer of good news. He had drawn a tremendous response in Hamburg with his performance of Toni's *Te Deum.*

"It seems a good idea to take God as your subject," Toni said with a smile. "Praise and prayers and praise; how much people seem to like that deep down in their hearts. But you have to go beyond that to reach others beside the faithful."

Kati started to serve lunch. Toni noticed that she had separated the food intended for him from the food she had prepared for his guest. Deliberately, he switched the plates. That good old soul would cook with butter for him, but, as far as she was concerned, lard was good enough for his guest.

"These pancakes are meant for people who take food seriously," Toni told Wahler. "Let's eat first and talk afterward."

Kati looked up sharply. She was vain where her cooking was concerned and she wanted to know if he really meant what he had said. When Toni smiled at her, she left the room satisfied.

"I have a question to ask you," Wahler said, as soon as the door had closed behind the housekeeper. "How would you feel about writing an opera?" he came right to the point.

"I couldn't consider anything like that right now," Toni's answer came readily. "I am working on my ninth symphony, and I can't allow unrelated thought to interfere with it."

"I see," Wahler said. He, of course, knew better than anyone else that a new stimulus was never more dangerous than

in a moment of emotional emptiness, when you were craving as at no other time for new experiences. And how readily those inspirations came at the beginning of a new composition, how easily themes seemed to rise from the earth, the gutters, the fountains, from memories long forgotten, until you had a great deal of material—but not enough by far—and then you were stalemated.

Toni leaned across the table. "I'm trying to write a symphony to God," he confided. "I can't get the finale," he added unhappily.

Wahler shook his head. "I don't believe it. *You* tired before the finale? Why it used to be one of your characteristics to place your climax at the end of your symphonies as though you meant to go beyond yourself into the spheres. What has happened?" He put his fork down and looked at Toni, surprised and perplexed.

"I don't know," Toni said. "I'm getting old, I suppose." Then, quickly, he shook his head. "No, it isn't that," he said frankly. "It's only that God seems so very great to me now, I just don't dare approach Him. I'm so miserable, so unworthy."

"How did you get along with the other movements?"

Toni looked past Wahler into the garden where the red geraniums made bright colorful splashes against the white statues. "They're quite different too, quite different from my former work. There is mysticism in the first movement instead of enthusiasm and joy. The scherzo is as light as a feather. But the greatest difference is in the appearance of the adagio. Remember how I congealed in pain the adagio

of my seventh symphony, how I groped for a solution, for some ethical explanation for so much suffering. Remember the third adagio, performed immediately after Franz's death, and the slow movement I wrote after Richard Wagner's death. Oh, how I cried in that, how my soul complained!" He bowed his head. "Now I know that suffering is grace and that pain softens our hearts and helps us understand other people's sorrows. And with this knowledge I have found peace."

Wahler looked tenderly across the table at his old friend. "Do you remember Madame Hibarra?" he asked. "You know, the beautiful singer who brought you the picture to the Gesellschaft Saal on that fateful night?"

Their eyes met and they both smiled, remembering the dark hour after that successful performance, the humiliation of defeat, and then the miracle that brought to an end the eternal struggle in which Toni had felt himself launched. The appearance of Madame Hibarra, her friendly, peaceful face, lit by a flickering gaslight, had made the day still more remarkable.

"She wants you to write the music for her operatic libretto, 'Astra.' It's beautiful material, an adaptation from Richard Voss' novel, *The Island Of The Dead.*"

'Barbara,' Toni thought, with a wave of tenderness surging in his heart. She had always appeared when he was in need and now for the first time, she was asking for something for herself. How could he let her down? Already new musical phrases began to form in his mind.

"It would have to be entirely pure," he said quickly.

"There mustn't be anything in this opera to arouse other than spiritual thoughts." He jumped up and walked excitedly to and fro. "Oh, why hasn't she written something else—a dramatic legend, for instance, like Liszt's St. Elizabeth? How I would throw myself into such an opera. And it would not interfere with my present work either. On the contrary . . ."

"You can't do it," Wahler said with sudden determination.

"How can you be so sure?"

"Because I know that you made your choice long ago—your choice between the Lord and woman."

"I know I did," Toni said. "I couldn't help it. But, oh, how I have missed the presence of a woman in my life!" He stopped his pacing in front of the window and his troubled gaze passed over the flower-beds and lingered on the fountain which shot beams of water into the air like geysers. From the Schwarzenberg Platz came the faint sound of muic that was as light and gay as a young girl's laughter.

"Tell Madame Hibarra that it would make me very happy to compose for her. Tell her that nobody knows my style better than she does, and nobody knows and understands better that I can't do anything outside of it. I'm a simple musician but I am in God's service, and because He is great the work that represents Him will necessarily have some stature, just as a vulgar person may become ennobled through contact with one of higher ideals. She will understand what I mean."

Yes, Barbara would understand. But, in spite of this comforting knowledge, Toni felt guilty. He should now have

leisure to do something for her. The Emperor had laid his protective hand upon Toni's work and, at Toni's humble request, had even calmed down Toni's most inimical critics, whose cold and lying words had built barriers between his music and the hearts of the people. Toni should now be able to show his gratitude to Barbara. But he could not put her before God. And his failing her weighed as a new burden upon him.

IV.

2.

Toni made up his mind to pass through that sea of clouds that separated him from eternity. Gathering all his strength, he climbed and climbed. After a lifelong struggle he could not forego his goal just because old age was holding him in its grip. As he fought his way on and on, he began to notice little stars here and there giving him light, and it seemed to him that one of them had been lit for him each time he had brought a supreme sacrifice to the Lord. His heart was throbbing rapidly and it hurt him. Then he noticed that somebody was wiping the sweat from his forehead, and he opened his eyes.

Beside him on the bed lay a blank sheet of note paper. He groped for his pencil and it was immediately put between his fingers. But in vain. The notes remained prisoners in his mind. His supreme desire to write his last finale for God could not fulfill itself. He let his head sink back upon the

pillow. "I'm aging," he said, smiling at the two awestricken boys, who had their gaze fixed upon him. "Surely I'm growing old if I no longer find the notes I want to put down."

He looked at his hands through which torrents of melodies had flowed from his brain to be spilled over the organ keyboard, and they appalled him. White and stiff, they lay beside him like two sticks. With his hands useless and his mind growing numb, how could he continue to serve as an instrument of God? Yet, if he did not stir up his fellow-men, the devil would surely surprise them in their sleep. And he was so tired. Such a hard struggle still awaited him. For a moment he was desperate over the fact that he had chosen such a difficult road.

"Why do you torture yourself?" the boy beside him asked. "God in his kindness wants you to lie still now and enjoy your peace like any other human being after his task has been done. Why don't you relax?"

Toni did not at once reply. He was listening intently, wondering whether, as in former days, he could still hear sounds which other ears could not receive. There was no more time to ask the Lord to reveal His plans. All he could do was continue on his road, even if that meant taking two steps forward and slipping back one.

"I'm a servant of God. To make others serve Him too, I must get nearer to Him, I must struggle up toward His Divine Presence. Then only can I send down waves and waves of music to earth as my link between men and God," Toni tried to explain to his students.

It was more easily said than done. Between himself and

God an abyss seemed to lie so deep that he could not even dream of crossing it. How gladly would he have struggled to the other side, had he found sufficient strength in his body. But the knowledge of the need to reach his goal stayed with him. He realized that he had to depend upon his own will and that he must not thrust his duty upon the kind heart of the Lord. All his life he had worked and trained himself for this last climb. He could not despair now. He smiled, and, looking up, he saw tears on the faces of the two boys.

"Don't let us keep you from your holy task," one of them whispered. "Don't let our weakness bring doubt into your faith."

Toni shook his head. "If doubt could enter my faith this could only prove that my faith was not strong enough. But I have never doubted in God, and there has never been a gap in my trust."

He relaxed a little and turned his eyes toward the sky. And then he felt as though the bonds between himself and the Almighty had become stronger again and, relying upon their strength, he let himself float upward and into the vast splendor of the supernatural world. He felt quite at ease up there now. Far below him was the earth: the trees beneath which he had walked; the houses in which happy families enjoyed the kindly charm of that human love which he had given up in exchange for an active life for God. Some of the houses were luminous as though shining with an inner light, and, with the supernatural knowledge which was now his, he knew that these were the houses of the faithful. There were barren stretches of land too, separated from the clearer

sphere by whirling cyclones. And then there were a few lovely oases—St. Florian was one of them.

It required a supreme effort to open his eyes. It would have been so beautiful to surrender to death, to say, 'my work is ended.' But surely Toni could not abandon to their fate those men beneath that stormy region, without even trying to assist them. Where would they find protection, what would nourish and water the deserts of their hearts if he did not flood them with the inexhaustible fountain of his music? It was remembered music, but the Lord did not seem to mind. Te Deum Laudamus! It must do. The hymn must substitute for his last finale.

The sky was one immense vault of blessedness. It dazzled his eyes to look up into all this splendor. But, when he closed his lids, he found peace.

"Non confundar in aeternam. I shall not be condemned in all eternity!" Toni whispered happily.

IV.

3.

The day after the funeral, Hecht sat in his office. His face, which so seldom showed any expression, was dark. He took one newspaper from the top of the pile before him and began to read:

"The funeral ceremony took place in the Karlskirche. Johannes Brahms was among the mourners. The Vienna

Glee Club sang a song, composed by Franz Spat, Bruckner's best friend. A chorus of wind instruments played the adagio from Bruckner's Seventh Symphony. Then Bruckner returned to St. Florian to rest in the monastery which had been his home and all his earthly happiness. As he had caused his masses to appear in cyclic succession, so now he has caused the symphony of his life to end where it began. Beneath the church of the monastery, beneath the beautiful organ, stands the centrally-located sarcophagus. Behind it, in a dark vault, lie the heaps of ancient skulls which once aroused the interest of the little choir-boy. The gold of the coffin may acquire the patina of age, but his work will always shine; his compositions are his good deeds by which he will always be remembered."

But Hecht soon learned that not all the newspapers gave that same sympathetic description. In the music column of the *Tagblatt* a critic had the following to say:

"Bruckner was a strange type . . . Certainly not a great artist . . . He lacked the joy of creating . . . His melodies are like sucklings growing from roots of Beethoven's oaks. As a church musician he found notes only to express the pompous, not the simple piety in the humble cottage. Even if I tried, I would not be able to say what I consider specifically Brucknerian . . ."

The assembled editors, misinterpreting the scowl on Hecht's face, tried to cheer him up. "Non confundar in aeternam," one of them sneered. "What Bruckner meant was that God shouldn't let his trilogy go to waste."

Hecht did not answer. He was looking at a pen and ink

sketch by Otto Boehler, portraying Bruckner's arrival in heaven. Richard Wagner was reaching both his hands out to him; Schubert greeted him with a song; Liszt approached with big strides; Master Beethoven's grim eyes softened beneath his bushy brows; Bach, seated at the organ, began to play a Hallelujah; and all the bells of heaven seemed to ring as lovingly as the old church bells in Windhaag. Why so much jubilation over the arrival of one so meek? An Austrian folk song comes back to mind. 'Because every Saturday night he's lit a holy light.' Ah, yes, Bruckner has lit many a holy light.

"Well, he is dead and gone and in a short time he will be forgotten," another of the music critics put in a word to please his superior, but Hecht seemed not at all pleased.

"You stupid fools," he said, flashing them an angry look. "I tell you that Bruckner is less dead than any of us."

They looked at him startled, not knowing if he was in his right mind. And then they heard him say beneath his breath: "Blessed is he who came to enlighten the heathen and to comfort the people of the earth . . ."

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Works by Anton Bruckner

CHURCH MUSIC

Masses

1842 Mass in C Major for soli, choir and two French horns
1844 Choral Mass for Holy Thursday, mixed choir
1848-49 Requiem in D Minor for soli, mixed choir and orchestra
1854 Missa solemnis in B Minor
1864 Mass Nr. 1, in D Minor
1866 Mass Nr. 2, in E Minor (second edition in 1882)
1867-68 Mass Nr. 3, in F Minor (Grosse Messe) (revised in 1876)

Psalms

1852 114th Psalm for five-voiced mixed choir and three trombones
1852 22nd Psalm for mixed choir and piano
1860 146th Psalm for soli, mixed choir and orchestra
1863 112th Psalm for mixed choir and orchestra
1892 150th Psalm for soprano solo and orchestra

Songs

1835 Pange Lingua in C Major for mixed choir
1843 Tantum ergo in D Major
1845 Herz Jesu Lied for mixed choir and organ
1845 "O du liebes Jesuskind" for solo and organ
1845 Asperges me for mixed choir and organ
1846 Five Tantum ergo in E-flat, C, B, A-flat, and D Major for mixed choir and organ
1847 Choral: "Dir, Herr, will ich mich ergeben" for mixed choir
1848 Choral: "In jener letzten der Nächte"
1848 Tantum ergo in A Major for choir and organ
1851 Entsagen, Kantate for soli, mixed choir and organ
1852 Die Geburt, for men's choir
1852 Magnificat for soli, mixed choir and orchestra
1852 Kantate: "Auf, Brüder, auf zur frohen Feier"
1854 Tantum ergo in B Major for mixed choir, two violins, two trombones and organ
1854 Vor Arneth's Grab, for men's choir

1855 Kantate: "Auf, Brüder, auf, die Saiten zur Hand," for soli, mixed choir and orchestra
1855 Festgesang: "St. Jodok spross aus edlem Stamm," for soli, mixed choir and piano
1856 Ave Maria, for mixed choir and organ
1861 Ave Maria, for seven-voiced mixed choir
1861 Afferentur, for mixed choir, three trombones and organ
1862 Festkantate for mixed choir, soli and wind instruments
1865 Trauungslied, for men's choir and organ
1868 Inveni David, for men's choir with four trombones
1868 Pange lingua (Phrygian) for mixed choir
1868 Hymnus St. Angeli custodem: "Jam Lucis" for mixed choir
1868 Asperges me, for mixed choir
1882 Ave Maria, for alto and organ
1883-84 Te deum, for soli, mixed choir, organ and orchestra
1884 Christus factus est, I., six-voiced choir and string orchestra
1884 Christus factus est, II., mixed choir
1884 Salvum fac, for mixed choir
1885 Virga Jesse, for mixed choir
? Ecce sacerdos magnus, for mixed choir, three trombones and organ

Choral—Accompaniments

1879 Inveni David
? Veni Sancte Spiritus
1887 Ave Regina coelorum

Organ Music

1836 Preludes for the organ
1837 Organ Preludes in E-flat Major
1846 Two organ pieces in D Minor
1847 Prelude and Fugue in C Minor
1861 Fugue in D Minor
1884 Preludium in C Major (for harmonium)

Symphonies

1865-66 Symphony I., in C Minor (second edition 1890)
1871-72 Symphony II., in C Minor (second edition 1875; third edition 1877)
1873 Symphony III., in D Minor (second edition 1876; third edition 1889)
1874 Symphony IV., in E-flat Major (second edition 1880; third edition 1880 [finale only])
1875-77 Symphony V., in B Major
1879-81 Symphony VI., in A Major
1881-83 Symphony VII., in E Major

1884-87 Symphony VIII., in C Minor (second edition 1890)
1891-94 Symphony IX., in D Minor

Chamber Music

1879 String Quintet in F Major
1879 Intermezzo (One movement of a string quintet)

Miscellaneous Compositions

1847 Aequale, for three trombones
1866 Abendklänge, for violin and piano

Piano Compositions

1850 Lancier Quadrille
1850 Steiermärker
1852-54 Three piano pieces for four hands
1854 Quadrille, arranged for four hands
1856 Klavierstück in E-flat Minor
1863 Stille Betrachtung an einem Herbstabend
1868 Phantasie
1868 Erinnerung

Orchestra Compositions

1862 March in D Minor
1862 Three orchestra movements
1862 Overture in G Minor
1863 Symphony in F Minor
1864 Symphony Nr. Zero in D Minor (revised in 1869)

Military Band

1862 Apollo March
1865 March in E-flat Major

Secular Songs

1843 Tafellied, for men's choir
1843 Libera in F Major
1845 Vergissmeinnicht, Kantate for soli, mixed choir, piano
1845 Das Lied vom deutschen Vaterland, for men's choir
1846 Festlied, for men's choir
1847 Der Lehrerstand, for men's choir
1848 Sternschnuppen, for men's choir
1851 Frühlingslied, for voice and piano

1851 Zwei Motti, for men's choir
1851 Das edle Herz, for men's choir
1852 Zwei Totenlieder, for mixed choir
1854 Liberia F Minor
1855 "Des Dankes Wort sei mir gegönnt," men's choir with soli
1858 Amaranth's Waldeslieder, for voice and piano
1861 Am Grabe, for men's choir
1862 Du bist wie eine Blume, mixed solo quartet
1862 Das edle Herz, for mixed choir
1862 Der Abendhimmel, for men's choir
1863 Germanenzug, for men's choir and wind orchestra
1864 Herbstlied, for men's choir with soli and piano
1866 Der Abendhimmel, for men's choir
1866 "O, könnt' ich dich beglücken," for men's choir and soli
1866 Vaterländisches Weinlied, for men's choir
1868 Motto, for mixed choir
1868 Im April, for voice and piano
1868 "Mein Herz und deine Stimme," for voice and piano
1868 Herbstkummer, for voice and piano
1869 Motto für die Liedertafel Sierning?
1869 Locus, iste, for mixed choir
1870 Mitternacht, for men's choir with tenor solo and piano
1876 Das hohe Lied, for men's choir, soli and wind instruments
1877 Tröster in Musik, for men's choir and organ
1878 Abendzauber, for men's choir with Yodel voices and quartet of French horns
1878 Tota pulchra, for mixed choir, tenor solo and organ
1878 Zwei Herzen haben sich gefunden, for men's choir
1879 Os justi, mixed choir
1882 Sängerbund, for men's choir
1886 Um Mitternacht, for men's choir with tenor solo
1890 Träumen und Wachen, for men's choir with tenor solo
1892 Vexilla regis, mixed choir
1892 Das deutsche Lied, for men's choir and wind instruments
1893 Helgoland, for men's choir with orchestra

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